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NARRATIVE

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JAMES WILLIAMS,

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AN

AMERICAN SLAVE,

WHO WAS FOR SEVERAL YEARS A DRIVER ON A COTTON PLANTATION IN ALABAMA

"Oh the slave, who toils from the rising sun to sundown—who labors in the cultivation of a crop whose fruits he may never reap—who comes home at nightfall weary, faint, and sick of heart, to find in his hut creatures that are to run in the same career with himself,—will you not tell him of a period when his toil shall be at an end? Will you not give him a hope for his children?"

Speech of O'Connell. London, 1833.

NEW YORK:

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY,
NO. 143 NASSAU STREET.

BOSTON:

ISAAC KNAPP, 25 CORNHILL.

1838.

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PREFACE.

"AMERICAN SLAVERY," said the celebrated John Wesley, "is the *vilest* beneath the sun!" Of the truth of this emphatic remark no other proof is required than an examination of the statute books of the American slave states. Tested by its own laws, in all that facilitates and protects the hateful process of converting a man into a "*chattel personal*;" in all that stamps the law-maker and law-upholder with meanness and hypocrisy, it certainly has no present rival of its "bad eminence;" and we may search in vain the history of a world's despotism for a parallel. The civil code of Justinian never acknowledged, with that our democratic despotisms, the essential equality of man. The dreamer in the gardens of Epicurus recognised neither in himself, nor in the slave who ministered to his luxury, the immortality of the spiritual nature. Neither Solon nor Lycurgus taught the inalienability of human rights.

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The Barons of the Feudal System, whose maxim was emphatically that of Wordsworth's robber,

> "That he should take who had the power,
> And he should keep who can,"

while trampling on the necks of their vassals, and counting the life of a man as of less value than that of a wild beast, never appealed to God for the sincerity of their belief that all men were created equal. It was reserved for American slaveholders to present to the world the hideous anomaly of a code of laws, beginning with the emphatic declaration of the inalienable rights of all men to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and closing with a deliberate and systematic denial of those rights, in respect to a large portion of their countrymen; engrossing on the same parchment the antagonist laws of liberty and tyranny. The very nature of this unnatural combination has rendered it necessary that American slavery, in law and in practice, should exceed every other in severity and cool atrocity. The masters of Greece and Rome permitted their slaves to read and write, and worship the gods of paganism in peace and security, for there was nothing in the laws, literature, or religion of the

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age to awaken in the soul of the bondman a just sense of his rights as a man. But the American slave-holder cannot be thus lenient. In the excess of his benevolence, as a political propagandist, he has kindled a fire for the oppressed of the old world to gaze at with hope, and for crowned heads and dynasties to tremble at; but a due regard to the safety of his "peculiar institution" compels him to put out the eyes of his own people, lest they too should see it. Calling on all the world to shake off the fetters of oppression, and wade through the blood of tyrants to freedom, he has been compelled to smother in darkness and silence the minds of his own bondmen, lest they too should hear and obey the summons, by putting the knife to his own throat. Proclaiming the truths of Divine Revelation, and sending the Scriptures to the four quarters of the earth, he has found it necessary to maintain heathenism at home by special enactments, and to make the second offence of teaching his slaves the message of salvation punishable with *death!*

What marvel then that American slavery, even on the *statute book*, assumes the right to transform

moral beings into brutes; *—that it legalizes man's usurpation of Divine authority: the substitution of the will of the master for the moral government of God;—that it annihilates the rights of conscience; debars from the enjoyment of religious rights and privileges by specific enactments; and enjoins disobedience to the Divine Lawgiver;—that it discourages purity and chastity, encourages crime, legalizes concubinage; and, while it places the slave entirely in the hands of his master, provides no real protection for his life or his person.

But it may be said, that these laws afford no certain evidence of the actual condition of the slaves: that, in judging the system by its code, no allowance is made for the humanity of individual masters. It was a just remark of the celebrated Priestley, that "*no people ever were found to be better than their laws, though many have been known to be worse.*" All history and common experience confirm this. Besides, admitting that the legal severity of a system may be soften-

* The *cardinal principle* of slavery, that a slave is not to be ranked among sentient beings, but among things, as an article of property, a chattel personal, obtains as undoubted law, in all the slave states. (Judge Stroud's sketch of Slave Laws, p. 22.)

ed in the practice of the humane, may it not also be aggravated by that of the avaricious and cruel?

But what are the testimony and admissions of slave-holders themselves on this point? In an Essay published in Charleston, S. C., in 1822, and entitled "A Refutation of the Calumnies circulated against the Southern and Western States," by the late Edwin C. Holland, Esq., it is stated, that "all slave-holders have laid down non-resistance, and perfect and uniform *obedience* to their orders, as fundamental principles in the government of their slaves;" that this is "a *necessary* result of the relation," and "*unavoidable.*" Robert J. Turnbull, Esq., of South Carolina, in remarking upon the management of slaves, says, "The only principle upon which any authority over them (the slaves) can be maintained is *fear*, and he who denies this has little knowledge of them." To this may be added the testimony of Judge Ruffin, of North Carolina, as quoted in Wheeler's Law of Slavery, p. 247. "The slave, to remain a slave, must feel that there is *no appeal from his master.* No man can anticipate the provocations which the slave would give, nor the consequent wrath of the master, prompting him

to BLOODY VENGEANCE on the turbulent traitor, a vengeance *generally* practised with impunity by reason of its *privacy*."

In an Essay on the "improvement of negroes on plantations," by Rev. Thomas S. Clay, a slave-holder of Bryan County, Georgia, and printed at the request of the Georgia Presbytery, in 1833, we are told, "that the present economy of the slave system is *to get all you can* from the slave, and give him in return *as little as will barely support him in a working condition!*" Here, in a few words, the whole enormity of slavery is exposed to view: "to *get all you can* from the slave"—by means of whips, and stocks and irons —by every device for torturing the body, without destroying its capability of labor; and in return give him as little of his coarse fare as will keep him, like a mere beast of burden, in a "*working condition.*" This is slavery, as explained by the slave-holder himself.

Mr. Clay further says: "*Offences against the master* are more severely punished than violations of the law of God, a fault which affects the slave's personal character a good deal. As examples we may notice, that *running away* is more

severely punished than adultery." "He (the slave) only knows his master as lawgiver and executioner, and the *sole object of punishment* held up to his view, is to make him *a more obedient and profitable slave*."

Hon. W. B. Seabrook, in an address before the Agricultural Society of St. Johns, Colleton, published by order of the Society, at Charleston, in 1834, after stating that, "as Slavery exists in South Carolina, the action of the citizens should rigidly conform to that state of things," and that "no *abstract opinions of the rights of man* should be allowed in any instance to modify the *police system of a plantation*," proceeds as follows: "*He* (the slave) *should be practically treated as a slave*, and thoroughly taught the true cardinal principle on which our peculiar institutions are founded, viz., that to his owner he is bound by the law of God and man; and that no human authority can sever the link which unites them. The great aim of the slave-holder, then, should be to keep his people in strict *subordination*. In this, it may in truth be said, lies his *entire duty*." Again, in speaking of the punishments of slaves, he remarks: "If to our army the disuse of THE LASH has been

prejudicial, to the slave-holder it would operate to deprive him of the MAIN SUPPORT of his authority. For the first class of offences, I consider imprisonment in THE STOCKS* at night, with or without hard labor by day, as a powerful auxiliary in the cause of *good* government." "*Experience* has convinced me that there is no punishment to which the slave looks with more horror, than that upon which I am now commenting, (the stocks,) and none which has been attended with happier results."

There is yet another class of testimony quite as pertinent as the foregoing, which may at any

* Of the nature of this punishment in the stocks, something may be learned by the following extract of a letter from a gentleman in Tallahasse, Florida, to the editor of the Ohio Atlas, dated June 9, 1835: "A planter, a professor of religion, in conversing upon the universality of whipping, remarked, that a planter in G———, who had whipped a great deal, at length got tired of it, and invented the following *excellent* method of punishment, which I saw practised while I was paying him a visit. The negro was placed in a sitting position, with his hands made fast above his head, and his feet in the stocks, so that he could not move any part of the body. The master retired, intending to leave him till morning, but we were awakened in the night by the groans of the negro, which were so doleful that we feared he was dying. We went to him, and found him covered with a cold sweat, and almost gone. He could not have lived an hour longer. Mr. ——— found the 'stocks' such an effective punishment, that it almost superseded the whip."

time be gleaned from the newspapers of the slave states—the advertisements of masters for their runaway slaves, and casual paragraphs, coldly relating cruelties, which would disgrace a land of Heathenism. Let the following suffice for a specimen:

To the Editors of the Constitutionalist.

AIKEN, S. C., Dec. 20, 1836.

I have just returned from an inquest I held over the dead body of a negro man, a runaway, that was shot near the South Edisto, in this District, (Barnwell,) on Saturday morning last. He came to his death by his own recklessness. He refused to be taken alive; and said that other attempts to take him had been made, and he was determined that he would not be taken. When taken, he was nearly naked—had a large dirk or knife, and a heavy club. He was, at first, (when those who were in pursuit of him found it absolutely necessary,) shot at with small-shot, with the intention of merely crippling him. He was shot at several times, and at last he was so disabled as to be compelled to surrender. He kept in the run of a creek in a very dense swamp all the time that the neighbors were in pursuit of him. As soon as the negro was taken, the best medical aid was procured, but he died on the same evening. One of the witnesses at the inquisition stated that the negro boy said that he was from Mississippi, and belonged to so many persons he did not know who his master was: but again he said his master's name was *Brown*. He said his own name was Sam; and when asked by another witness who his master was, he muttered something like Augusta or Augustine. The boy was apparently above 35 or 40 years of age—about six feet high—slightly yellow in the face—very long beard or whiskers—and very stout built, and a stern countenance; and appeared to have been run away a long time.

WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD,
Coroner, (ex officio,) Barnwell Dist., S. C.

☞The Mississippi and other papers will please copy the above.—*Georgia Constitutionalist.*

$100 REWARD.—Ran away from the subscriber, living on Herring Bay, Anne Arundel Co., Md., on Saturday, 28th January, negro man Elijah, who calls himself Elijah Cook; is about 21 years of age, well made, of a very dark complexion, has an impediment in his speech, and *a scar on his left cheek bone, apparently occasioned by a shot.* J. SCRIVENER.

[Annapolis (Md.) Rep., Feb. 1837.

$40 REWARD.—Ran away from my residence, near Mobile, two negro men, Isaac and Tim. Isaac is from 25 to 30 years old, dark complexion, scar on the right side of the head, and also one on the right side of the body, occasioned by BUCK SHOT. Tim is 22 years old, dark complexion, scar on the right cheek, as also another on the back of the neck. Captains and owners of steamboats, vessels, and water crafts of every description, are cautioned against taking them on board, under the penalty of the law, and all other persons against harboring or in any manner favoring the escape of said negroes, under like penalty. SARAH WALSH.

Mobile, Sept. 1.

[Montgomery (Ala.) Advertiser, Sept. 29, 1837.

$200 REWARD.—Ran away from the subscriber, about three years ago, a certain negro man named Ben, (commonly known by the name of Ben Fox.) He is about 5 feet 5 or 6 inches high, chunky made, yellow complexion, and has but one eye. Also, one other negro by the name of Rigdon, who ran away on the 8th of this month. He is stout made, tall, and very black, with large lips.

I will give the reward of one hundred dollars for each of the above negroes, to be delivered to me or confined in the jail of Lenoir or Jones County, or *for the killing of them so that I can see them.* Masters of vessels, and all others, are cautioned against harboring, employing, or carrying them away, under the penalty of the law.

W. D. COBB.

Lenoir Co., N. C., November 12, 1836.

BROUGHT TO JAIL.—In Irwinton, Wilkinson County, (Ga.) 16th Nov. 1837, a negro man by the name of JACOB, who says he belongs to Heritan Middleton, in Henry County, Alabama. He says he was hired

to John Webb, near West Point, in this State. He is about 6 feet high, dark complexion, and slow in speaking. There are no marks discoverable, *only* he is VERY BADLY SHOT *in the right side and right hand.* The owner or owners are requested to come forward, prove property, pay charges, and take him away.

S. B. MURPHEY, Jailer.

Milledgville, Jan. 2, 1838. [Georgia Journal.

[From the Clinton (Miss.) Gazette, July 23, 1836.]

WAS COMMITTED to the jail of Covington County, on the 26th day of June, 1836, by G. D. Gere, Esq., a negro man, who says his name is JOSIAH, and says he belongs to John Martin, an Irishman, living in the State of Louisiana, on the west side of the Mississippi river, twenty miles below Natchez. Josiah is 5 feet 8 inches high, heavy built, copper color, his back *very much scarred* with the *whip*, and BRANDED on the thigh and hips in *three* or *four* places, thus, (I. M.) or (J. M.;) the M. is very plain, but the I. or J. is not plain: the rim of his right ear has been bit or cut off. He is about 31 years of age, had on, when committed, pantaloons made of bed ticking, cotton coat, and an old fur hat very much worn. The owner of the above described negro is requested to comply with the requisitions of the law in such cases made and provided.

J. L. JOLLEY, Sheriff, C. C.

Williamsburgh, June 28, 1836.

WAS COMMITTED to jail, a negro man, who says that his name is HARRY. Said boy is about 30 years old, light complexion and bald head; has a scar on his left knee; also, one on his forehead, and one on his right hand; *he is very much marked with the whip.* The owner, &c. B. W. HATCH, Jailer.

[Port Gibson (Mi.,) Correspondent, Sept. 16, 1837.

$50 REWARD.—Ran away from the subscriber, a negro fellow named Dick, about 21 or 22 years of age, dark mulatto, has many scars on his back from being *whipped.* The boy was purchased by me from Thomas L. Arnold, and absconded about the time the purchase was made. JAMES NOE.

[Sentinel and Expositor, Vicksburg, (Mi.,) Oct. 10, 1837.

[From the New Orleans Bee, Oct. 28, 1837.]

$10 REWARD.—Ran away, on the 9th of October, CAROLINE, aged about 38 years; had a collar on with one prong turned down. T. CUGGY,
Gallatin st., between Hospital and Barracks.

$25 REWARD.—For the black woman, Betsey, who left my house in the Faubourg, McDonnough, about the 12th inst., when she had on her neck an iron collar; has a mark on her neck and is about 20 years of age.
CHARLES KERNIN.
[New Orleans paper, March, 1837.

$50 REWARD.—Ran away from Murot's Plantation, near Baton Rouge, about two months ago, the negro man Manuel. Description—black, 5 feet 4 inches high, about 30 years old, one scar on the forehead, and *much marked with irons*.
[New Orleans Bee, May 27, 1837.

COMMITTED to the jail of Pike County, a man about twenty-three or four years old, who calls his name John. The said negro has a clog of iron on his right foot which will weigh 4 or 5 pounds. The owner is requested, &c. B. W. HODGES, Jailer.
[Montgomery (Alabama) Advertiser, Sept. 29, 1837.

$100 REWARD.—Ran away from the subscriber, six weeks ago, two negro men, one a tall fellow, stoops considerably in walking; when spoken to fiercely, looks as if he would sink into the earth. The other is a short stumpy fellow, of a very black or almost blue color, large cheeks, has a scar over one eye; also, *one on his leg from the bite of a dog*, and a burn on his body from a piece of *hot iron*, in the shape of a T!
JOHN A. DILLAHUNTY.
[New Orleans Bee, Feb. 8, 1837.

"A negro who had absconded from his master, and for whom a reward was offered of $100, has been apprehended and committed to prison in Savannah, Georgia. The editor who states the

fact, adds, with as much coolness as though there were no barbarity in the matter, that he did not surrender until he was considerably *maimed by the dogs** that had been set on him,—desperately fighting them, one of which he cut badly with a sword."

New York Commercial Advertiser, June 8, 1827.

From the foregoing evidence on the part of slave-holders themselves, we gather the following facts:

1. That perfect obedience is required of the slave—that he is made to feel that there is no appeal from his master.

2. That the authority of the master is only maintained by fear—a "*reign of terror.*"

* In regard to the use of bloodhounds, for the recapture of runaway slaves, we insert the following from the New York Evangelist, being an extract of a letter from Natchez, (Miss.) under date of January 31, 1835: "An instance was related to me in Clairborne County, in Mississippi. A runaway was heard about the house in the night. The hound was put upon his track, and in the morning was found watching the dead body of the negro. The dogs are trained to this service when young. A negro is directed to go into the woods and secure himself upon a tree. When sufficient time has elapsed for doing this, the hound is put upon his track. The blacks are compelled to worry them until they make them their implacable enemies; and it is common to meet with dogs which will take no notice of whites, though entire strangers, but will suffer no blacks beside the house servants to enter the yard."

3. That "the economy of slavery is to *get all you can* from the slave, and give him in return as little as will barely support him in a working condition."

4. That runaway slaves may be shot down with impunity by any white person.

5. That masters offer rewards for "*killing*" their slaves, "*so that they may see them!*"

6. That slaves are branded with hot irons, and very much scarred with the whip.

7. That *iron collars*, with projecting prongs, rendering it almost impossible for the wearer to lie down, are fastened upon the *necks of women.*

8. That the LASH is the MAIN SUPPORT of the slave-holder's authority; but, that the *stocks* are "a powerful auxiliary" to his government.

9. That runaway slaves are chased with dogs —men hunted like beasts of prey.

Such is American Slavery in practice.

The testimony thus far adduced is only that of the slave-holder and wrong-doer himself: the admission of men who have a direct interest in keeping ought of sight the horrors of their system. It is, besides, no voluntary admission. Having "framed iniquity by law," it is out of

their power to hide it. For the recovery of their runaway property, they are compelled to advertise in the public journals, and, that it may be identified, they are under the necessity of describing the marks of the whip on the backs of women, the iron collars about the neck, the gun-shot wounds, and the traces of the branding-iron. Such testimony must, in the nature of things, be partial and incomplete. But for a full revelation of the secrets of the prison-house, we must look to the slave himself. The Inquisitors of Goa and Madrid never disclosed the peculiar atrocities of their "hall of horrors." It was the escaping heretic, with his swollen and disjointed limbs, and bearing about him the scars of rack and fire, who exposed them to the gaze and abhorrence of Christendom.

The following pages contain the simple and unvarnished story of an AMERICAN SLAVE,—of one whose situation, in the first place, as a favorite servant in an aristocratic family in Virginia, and afterwards as the sole and confidential driver on a large plantation in Alabama, afforded him rare and peculiar advantages for accurate observation of the practical workings of the sys-

tem. His intelligence, evident candor, and grateful remembrance of those kindnesses which in a land of slavery made his cup of suffering less bitter; the perfect accordance of his statements (made at different times and to different individuals*) one with another, as well as those statements themselves, all afford strong confirmation of the truth and accuracy of his story. There seems to have been no effort, on his part, to make his picture of slavery one of entire darkness—he details every thing of a mitigating character which fell under his observation; and even the cruel deception of his master has not rendered him unmindful of his early kindness.

The Editor is fully aware that he has not been able to present this affecting narrative in the simplicity and vivid freshness with which it fell from the lips of the narrator. He has, however, as

* The reader is referred to JOHN G. WHITTIER, of Amesbury, Mass., or to the following gentlemen, who have heard the whole or a part of his story from his own lips: Emmor Kimber, of Kimberton, Pa., Lindley Coates, of Lancaster Co., do.; James Mott, of Philadelphia, Lewis Tappan, Elisur Wright, Jun., Rev. Dr. Follen, and James G. Birney, of New York. The latter gentleman, who was a few years ago a citizen of Alabama, assures us that the statements made to him by James Williams were such as he had every reason to believe, from his own knowledge of slavery in that State.

closely as possible, copied his manner, and in many instances his precise language. THE SLAVE HAS SPOKEN FOR HIMSELF. Acting merely as his amanuensis, he has carefully abstained from comments of his own.*

The picture here presented to the people of the free states is, in many respects, a novel one. We all know something of Virginia and Kentucky slavery. We have heard of the internal slave trade—the pangs of separation—the slave ship with its "cargo of despair," bound for the New Orleans market—and the weary journey of the chained Coffle to the cotton country. But here, in a great measure, we have lost sight of the victims of avarice and lust. We have not studied the dreadful economy of the cotton plantation, and know but little of the secrets of its unlimited despotism.

But in this narrative the scenes of the plantation rise before us, with a distinctness which approaches reality. We hear the sound of the horn at daybreak, calling the sick and the weary to

* As the narrator was unable to read or write, it is quite possible that the orthography of some of the names of individuals mentioned in this story may not be entirely correct. For instance, the name of his master may have been either Larrimer or Larrimore.

toil unrequited. Woman, in her appealing delicacy and suffering, about to become a mother, is fainting under the lash, or sinking exhausted beside her cotton row. We hear the prayer for mercy answered with sneers and curses. We look on the instruments of torture, and the corpses of murdered men. We see the dogs, reeking hot from the chase, with their jaws foul with human blood. We see the meek and aged Christian, scarred with the lash, and bowed down with toil, offering the supplication of a broken heart to his Father in Heaven for the forgiveness of his brutal enemy. We hear, and from our inmost hearts repeat, the affecting interrogatory of the aged slave, "*How long, Oh Lord! how long!*"

The Editor has written out the details of this painful narrative with feelings of sorrow. If there be any who feel a morbid satisfaction in dwelling upon the history of outrage and cruelty, he at least is not one of them. His taste and habits incline him rather to look to the pure and beautiful in our nature—the sunniest side of humanity—its kindly sympathies—its holy affections—its charities and its love. But it is because he has seen that all which is thus beautiful

and excellent in mind and heart perishes in the atmosphere of slavery; it is because humanity in the slave sinks down to a level with the brute, and in the master gives place to the attributes of a fiend—that he has not felt at liberty to decline the task. He cannot sympathize with that abstract and delicate philanthropy which hesitates to bring itself in contact with the sufferer, and which shrinks from the effort of searching out the extent of his afflictions. The emblem of Practical Philanthropy is the Samaritan stooping over the wounded Jew. It must be no fastidious hand which administers the oil and the wine, and binds up the unsightly gashes.

Believing, as he does, that this narrative is one of truth; that it presents an unexaggerated picture of slavery as it exists on the cotton plantations of the South and West, he would particularly invite to its perusal those individuals, and especially those professing Christians at the North, who have ventured to claim for such a system the sanction and approval of the religion of Jesus Christ. In view of the facts here presented, let these men seriously inquire of themselves, whether, in advancing such a claim, they are not utter-

ing a higher and more audacious blasphemy than any which ever fell from the pens of Voltaire and Paine. As if to cover them with confusion, and leave them utterly without excuse for thus libelling the character of a just God, these developments are making, and the veil rising, which for long years of sinful apathy has rested upon the abominations of American Slavery. Light is breaking into its dungeons, disclosing the wreck of buried intellect—of hearts broken—of human affections outraged—of souls ruined. The world will see it as God has always seen it; and when He shall at length make inquisition for blood, and His vengeance kindle over the habitations of cruelty, with a destruction more terrible than that of Sodom and Gomorrah, His righteous dealing will be justified of man, and His name glorified among the nations, and there will be a voice of rejoicing in Earth and in Heaven. ALLELUIA!—THE PROMISE IS FULFILLED!—FOR THE SIGHING OF THE POOR AND THE OPPRESSION OF THE NEEDY, GOD HATH RISEN!

It is the earnest desire of the Editor that this narrative may be the means, under God, of awakening in the hearts of all who read it a sympa-

thy for the oppressed which shall manifest itself in immediate, active, self-sacrificing exertions for their deliverance; and, while it excites abhorrence of his crimes, call forth pity for the oppressor. May it have the effect to prevent the avowed and associated friends of the slave from giving such an undue importance to their own trials and grievances, as to forget in a great measure the sorrows of the slave. Let its cry of wo, coming up from the plantations of the South, suppress every feeling of selfishness in our hearts. Let our regret and indignation at the denial of the right of petition be felt only because we are thereby prevented from pleading in the halls of Congress for the "suffering and the dumb." And let the fact, that we are shut out from half the territory of our country, be lamented only because it prevents us from bearing personally to the land of slavery the messages of hope for the slave, and of rebuke and warning for the oppressor.

New York, 24*th* 1*st. mo.*, 1838.

NARRATIVE.

I was born in Powhatan County, Virginia, on the plantation of George Larrimore, sen., at a place called Mount Pleasant, on the 16th of May, 1805. My father was the slave of an orphan family whose name I have forgotten, and was under the care of a Mr. Brooks, guardian of the family. He was a native of Africa, and was brought over when a mere child, with his mother. My mother was the slave of George Larrimore, sen. She was nearly white, and is well known to have been the daughter of Mr. Larrimore himself. She died when myself and my twin brother Meshech were five years of age. I can scarcely remember her. She had in all eight children, of whom only five are now living. One, a brother, belongs to the heirs of the late Mr. Brockenbrough, of Charlottsville; of whom he hires his time, and pays annually $120 for it. He is a member of the Baptist church, and used to preach occasionally. His wife is a free woman

from Philadelphia, and being able to read and write, taught her husband. The whites do not know that he can write, and have often wondered that he could preach so well without learning. It is the practice when a church is crowded to turn the blacks out of their seats. My brother did not like this, and on one occasion preached a sermon from a text, showing that all are of one blood. Some of the whites who heard it said that such preaching would raise an insurrection among the negroes. Two of them told him that if he would prove his doctrine by Scripture, they would let him go, but if he did not, he should have nine and thirty lashes. He accordingly preached another sermon, and spoke with a great deal of boldness. The two men who were in favor of having him whipped left before the sermon was over; those who remained acknowledged that he had proved his doctrine, and preached a good sermon, and many of them came up and shook hands with him. The two opposers, Scott and Brockley, forbid my brother, after this, to come upon their estates. They were both Baptists, and my brother had before preached to their people. During the cholera at Richmond,

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my brother preached a sermon, in which he compared the pestilence to the plagues which afflict the Egyptian slave-holders, because they would not let the people go. After the sermon some of the whites threatened to whip him. Mr. Valentine, a merchant on Shocko Hill, prevented them; and a young lawyer. named Brooks said it was wrong to threaten a man for preaching the truth. Since the insurrection of Nat. Turner he has not been allowed to preach at all.

My twin brother was for some time the property of Mr. John Griggs, of Richmond, who sold him, about three years since, to an Alabama cotton planter, with whom he staid one year, and then ran away; and in all probability escaped into the free states or Canada, as he was seen near the Maryland line. My other brother lives in Fredericksburg, and belongs to a Mr. Scott, a merchant, formerly of Richmond. He was sold from Mr. Larrimore's plantation because his wife was a slave of Mr. Scott. My only sister is the slave of John Smith, of King William. Her husband was the slave of Mr. Smith, when the latter lived in Powhatan County, and when he removed to King William she was taken with her husband.

My old master, George Larrimore, married Jane Roane, the sister of a gentleman named John Roane, one of the most distinguished men in Virginia, who in turn married a sister of my master. One of his sisters married a Judge Scott, and another married Mr. Brockenbrough, of Charlottsville. Mr. Larrimore had three children; George, Jane, and Elizabeth. The former was just ten days older than myself; and I was his playmate and constant associate in childhood. I used to go with him to his school, and carry his books for him as far as the door, and meet him there when the school was dismissed. We were very fond of each other, and frequently slept together. He taught me the letters of the alphabet, and I should soon have acquired a knowledge of reading, had not George's mother discovered her son in the act of teaching me. She took him aside and severely reprimanded him. When I asked him, not long after, to tell me more of what he had learned at school, he said that his mother had forbidden him to do so any more, as her father had a slave who was instructed in reading and writing, and on that account proved very troublesome. He could imitate the hand-writing of all the neighboring planters, and used to write

passes and certificates of freedom for the slaves, and finally wrote one for himself, and went off to Philadelphia, from whence her father received from him a saucy letter, thanking him for his education.

The early years of my life went by pleasantly. The bitterness of my lot I had not yet realized. Comfortably clothed and fed, kindly treated by my old master and mistress and the young ladies, and the playmate and confidant of my young master, I did not dream of the dark reality of evil before me.

When he was fourteen years of age, master George went to his uncle Brockenbrough's, at Charlottsville, as a student of the University. After his return from college, he went to Paris and other parts of Europe, and spent three or four years in study and travelling. In the mean time I was a waiter in the house, dining-room servant, &c. My old master visited and received visits from a great number of the principal families in Virginia. Each summer, with his family, he visited the sulphur springs and the mountains. While George was absent, I went with him to New Orleans, in the winter season, on account of his failing health. We spent three days in

Charleston, at Mr. McDuffie's, with whom my master was on intimate terms. Mr. McDuffie spent several days on one occasion at Mt. Pleasant. He took a fancy to me, and offered my master the servant whom he brought with him, and $500 beside, for me. My master considered it almost an insult, and said, after he was gone, that Mr. McDuffie needed money, to say the least, as much as he did.

He had a fine house in Richmond, and used to spend his winters there with his family, taking me with him. He was not there much at other times, except when the Convention of 1829, for amending the State Constitution, was held in that city. He had a quarrel with Mr. Neal, of Richmond Co., in consequence of some remarks upon the subject of slavery. It came near terminating in a duel. I recollect that during the sitting of the Convention my master asked me, before several other gentlemen, if I wished to be free and go back to my own country. I looked at him with surprise, and inquired what country.

"Africa, to be sure," said he, laughing.

I told him that was not my country—that I was born in Virginia.

"Oh yes," said he, "but your father was born

in Africa." He then said that there was a place on the African coast called Liberia, where a great many free blacks were going; and asked me to tell him honestly whether I would prefer to be set free on condition of going to Africa, or live with him and remain a slave. I replied that I had rather be as I was.

I have frequently heard him speak against slavery to his visitors. I heard him say on one occasion, when some gentlemen were arguing in favor of sending the free colored people to Africa, that this was as really the black man's country as the white's, and that it would be as humane to knock the free negroes, at once, on the head, as to send them to Liberia. He was a kind man to his slaves. He was proud of them, and of the reputation he enjoyed of feeding and clothing them well. They were, as near as I can judge, about 300 in number. He never to my knowledge sold a slave, unless to go with a wife or husband, and at the slave's own request. But all except the very wealthiest planters in his neighborhood sold them frequently. John Smoot, of Powhatan Co., has sold a great number. Bacon Tait* used to be one of the principal purchasers.

* Bacon Tait's advertisement of "new and commodious buildings" for the keeping of negroes, situated at

He had a jail at Richmond where he kept them. There were many others who made a business of buying and selling slaves. I saw on one occasion, while travelling with my master, a gang of nearly two hundred men fastened to a single chain. The women followed unchained and the children in wagons. It was a sorrowful sight. Some were praying, some crying, and they all had a look of extreme wretchedness. It is an awful thing to a Virginia slave to be sold for the Alabama and Mississippi country. I have known some of them to die of grief, and others to commit suicide, on account of it. Sometimes, when slaves are to be sold, they go to the rich planters in their vicinity and beseech them to purchase them. It is no uncommon thing for those planters to whom they thus apply, to give orders for their concealment somewhere on the plantation, and, after they are advertised as runaways, to offer to buy them, and run the risk of finding them. In this way they get them for a fourth part of their value. After the bargain is made, the slaves come back to their old masters, ask pardon for running away, and are turned over to their new owners. Mr. Larrimore employed his overseer

the corner of 15th and Carey streets, appears in the Richmond Whig of Sept. 1835.—Editor.

in obtaining six slaves in this way, of Stephen Ransdell, of Caroline County.

In my seventeenth year, I was married to a girl named Harriet, belonging to John Gatewood, a planter, living about four miles from Mt. Pleasant. She was about a year younger than myself—was a tailoress, and used to cut out clothes for the hands.

We were married by a white clergyman named Jones; and were allowed two or three weeks to ourselves, which we spent in visiting and other amusements.

The field hands are seldom married by a clergyman. They simply invite their friends together, and have a wedding party.

Our two eldest children died in their infancy; two are now living. The youngest was only two months old when I saw him for the last time. I used to visit my wife on Saturday and Sunday evenings.

My young master came back from Europe in delicate health. He was advised by his physicians to spend the winter in New Orleans, whither he accordingly went, taking me with him. Here he became acquainted with a French lady of one

of the first families in the city. The next winter he also spent in New Orleans, and on his third visit, three years after his return from Europe, he was married to the lady above mentioned. In May he returned to Mt. Pleasant, and found the elder Larrimore on his sick bed, from which he never rose again. He died on the 14th of July. There was a great and splendid funeral, as his relatives and friends were numerous.

His large property was left principally in the hands of his widow until her decease, after which it was to be divided among the three children. In February, Mrs. Larrimore also died. The administrators upon the estate were John Green, Esq., and Benjamin Temple.

My young mistresses, Jane and Elizabeth, were very kind to the servants. They seemed to feel under obligations to afford them every comfort and gratification, consistent with the dreadful relation of ownership which they sustained towards them. Whipping was scarcely known on the estate; and, whenever it did take place, it was invariably against the wishes of the young ladies.

But the wife of master George was of a disposition entirely the reverse. Feeble, languid, and

inert, sitting motionless for hours at her window, or moving her small fingers over the strings of her guitar, to some soft and languishing air, she would have seemed to a stranger incapable of rousing herself from that indolent repose, in which mind as well as body participated. But, the slightest disregard of her commands, and sometimes even the neglect to anticipate her wishes, on the part of the servants, was sufficient to awake her. The inanimate and delicate beauty then changed into a stormy virago. Her black eyes glowed and sparkled with a snaky fierceness, her full lips compressed, and her brows bent and darkened. Her very voice, soft and sweet when speaking to her husband, and exquisitely fine and melodious when accompanying her guitar, was at such times shrill, keen, and loud. She would order the servants of my young mistresses upon her errands, and if they pleaded their prior duty to obey the calls of another would demand that they should be forthwith whipped for their insolence. If the young ladies remonstrated with her, she met them with a perfect torrent of invective and abuse. In these paroxysms of fury she always spoke in French, with a vehemence and volubility which strongly contrasted with the

calmness and firmness of the young ladies. She would boast of what she had done in New Orleans, and of the excellent discipline of her father's slaves. She said she had gone down in the night to the cell under her father's house, and whipped the slaves confined there with her own hands. I had heard the same thing from her father's servants at New Orleans when I was there with my master. She brought with her from New Orleans a girl named Frances. I have seen her take her by the ear, lead her up to the side of the room, and beat her head against it. At other times she would snatch off her slipper and strike the girl on her face and head with it.

She seldom manifested her evil temper before master George. When she did, he was greatly troubled, and he used to speak to his sisters about it. Her manner towards him was invariably that of extreme fondness. She was dark complexioned, but very beautiful; and the smile of welcome with which she used to meet him was peculiarly fascinating. I did not marvel that *he* loved her; while at the same time, in common with all the house servants, I regarded her as a being possessed with an evil spirit,—half woman, and half fiend.

Soon after the settlement of the estate, I heard

my master speak of going out to Alabama. His wife had 1500 acres of wild land in Greene County, in that State, and he had been negotiating for 500 more. Early in the summer of 1833, he commenced making preparations for removing to that place a sufficient number of hands to cultivate it. He took great pains to buy up the wives and husbands of those of his own slaves who had married out of the estate, in order, as he said, that his hands might be contented in Alabama, and not need chaining together while on their journey. It is always found necessary by the regular slave-traders, in travelling with their slaves to the far South, to handcuff and chain their wretched victims, who have been bought up as the interest of the trader and the luxury or necessities of the planter may chance to require, without regard to the ties sundered or the affections made desolate by these infernal bargains. About the 1st of September, after the slaves destined for Alabama had taken a final farewell of their old home, and of the friends they were leaving behind, our party started on their long journey. There were in all 214 slaves, men, women, and children. The men and women travelled on foot—the small children in the wagons,

containing the baggage, &c. Previous to my departure, I visited my wife and children, at Mr. Gatewood's. I took leave of them with the belief that I should return with my master, as soon as he had seen his hands established on his new plantation. I took my children in my arms and embraced them; my wife, who was a member of the Methodist church, implored the blessing of God upon me during my absence, and I turned away to follow my master.

Our journey was a long and tedious one, especially to those who were compelled to walk the whole distance. My master rode in a sulky, and I, as his body servant, on horseback. When we crossed over the Roanoke, and were entering upon North Carolina, I remember with what sorrowful countenances and language the poor slaves looked back for the last time upon the land of their nativity. It was their last farewell to Old Virginia. We passed through Georgia, and, crossing the Chattahooche, entered Alabama. Our way for many days was through a sandy tract of country, covered with pine woods, with here and there the plantation of an Indian or a half-breed. After crossing what is called Line Creek, we found large

plantations along the road, at intervals of four or five miles. The aspect of the whole country was wild and forbidding, save to the eye of a cotton planter. The clearings were all new, and the houses rudely constructed of logs. The cotton fields were skirted with an enormous growth of oak, pine, and bass wood. Charred stumps stood thickly in the clearings, with here and there a large tree girdled by the axe and left to decay. We reached at last the place of our destination. It was a fine tract of land, with a deep rich soil. We halted on a small knoll, where the tents were pitched, and the wagons unladen. I spent the night with my master at a neighboring plantation, which was under the care of an overseer named Flincher.

The next morning my master received a visit from a man named Huckstep, who had undertaken the management of his plantation as an overseer. He had been an overseer on cotton plantations many years in Georgia and North Carolina. He was apparently about forty years of age, with a sunburnt and sallow countenance. His thick shock of black hair was marked in several places with streaks of white, occasioned, as he afterwards told

me, by blows received from slaves whom he was chastising.

After remaining in the vicinity for about a week, my master took me aside one morning, told me he was going to Selma, in Dallas County, and wished me to be in readiness, on his return the next day, to start for Virginia. This was to me cheering news. I spent that day and the next among my old fellow-servants who had lived with me in Virginia. Some of them had messages to send by me to their friends and acquaintances. In the afternoon of the second day after my master's departure, I distributed among them all the money which I had about me, viz., fifteen dollars. I noticed that the overseer Huckstep laughed at this and called me a fool; and that whenever I spoke of going home with my master, his countenance indicated something between a smile and a sneer.

Night came; but, contrary to his promise, my master did not come. I still, however, expected him the next day. But another night came, and he had not returned. I grew uneasy, and inquired of Huckstep where he thought my master was.

"On his way to old Virginia," said he, with a malicious laugh.

"But," said I, "master George told me that he should come back and take me with him to Virginia."

"Well, boy," said the overseer, "I'll now tell ye what master George, as you call him, told me. You are to stay here and act as driver of the field hands. That was the order. So you may as well submit to it at once."

I stood silent and horror-struck. Could it be that the man whom I had served faithfully from our mutual boyhood, whose slightest wish had been my law, to serve whom I would have laid down my life, while I had confidence in his integrity—could it be that he had so cruelly and wickedly deceived me? I looked at the overseer. He stood laughing at me in my agony.

"Master George gave you no such orders," I exclaimed, maddened by the overseer's look and manner.

The overseer looked at me with a fiendish grin. "None of your insolence," said he, with a dreadful oath. "I never saw a Virginia nigger that I couldn't manage, proud as they are. Your master has left you in my hands, and you must obey my orders. If you don't, why, I shall have to make

you '*hug the widow there*,'" pointing to a tree, to which I afterwards found the slaves were tied when they were whipped.

That night was one of sleepless agony. Virginia, the hills and the streams of my birth-place; the kind and hospitable home; the gentle-hearted sisters, sweetening with their sympathy the sorrows of the slave; my wife, my children—all that had thus far made up my happiness, rose in contrast with my present condition. Deeply as he has wronged me, may my master himself never endure such a night of misery!

At daybreak, Huckstep told me to dress myself and attend to his directions. I rose, subdued and wretched, and at his orders handed the horn to the headman of the gang, who summoned the hands to the field. They were employed in clearing land for cultivation, cutting trees, and burning. I was with them through the day, and at night returned once more to my lodgings to be laughed at by the overseer. He told me that I should do well, he did not doubt, by and by, but that a Virginia driver generally had to be whipped a few times himself before he could be learned to do justice to the slaves under his charge. They were not equal to

those raised in North Carolina, for keeping the lazy hell-hounds, as he called the slaves, at work.

And this was my condition! a driver set over more than one hundred and sixty of my kindred and friends, with orders to apply the whip unsparingly to every one, whether man or woman, who faltered in the task, or was careless in the execution of it, myself subject at any moment to feel the accursed lash upon my own back, if feelings of humanity should perchance overcome the selfishness of misery, and induce me to spare and pity.

I lived in the same house with Huckstep; a large log house, roughly finished, where we were waited upon by an old woman, whom we used to call aunt Polly. Huckstep was, I soon found, inordinately fond of peach brandy; and once or twice in the course of a month he had a drunken debauch, which usually lasted from two to four days. He was then full of talk, laughed immoderately at his own nonsense, and would keep me up until late at night listening to him. He was at these periods terribly severe to his hands, and would order me to use up the cracker of my whip every day upon the poor creatures who were toiling in the field; and in order to satisfy him, I used

to tear it off when returning home at night. He would then praise me for a good fellow, and invite me to drink with him. He used to tell me at such times that if I would only drink as he did I should be worth a thousand dollars more for it. He would sit for hours with his peach brandy, cursing and swearing, laughing and telling stories full of obscenity and blasphemy. He would sometimes start up, take my whip, and rush out to the slave quarters, flourish it about and frighten their inmates, and often cruelly beat them. He would order the women to pull up their clothes, in Alabama style, as he called it, and then whip them for not complying. He would then come back roaring and shouting to the house, and tell me what he had done; if I did not laugh with him, he would get angry and demand what the matter was. Oh! how often have I laughed, at such times, when my heart ached within me; and how often, when permitted to retire to my bed, I found relief in tears!

He had no wife, but kept a colored mistress in a house situated on a gore of land between the plantation and that of Mr. Goldsby's. He brought her with him from North Carolina, and had three children by her.

Sometimes, in his fits of intoxication, he would come riding into the field, swinging his whip, and crying out to the hands to strip off their shirts and be ready to take a whipping; and this too when they were all busily at work. At another time, he would gather the hands around him and fall to cursing and swearing about the neighboring overseers. They were, he said, cruel to their hands, whipped them unmercifully, and in addition starved them. As for himself, he was the kindest and best fellow within forty miles; and the hands ought to be thankful that they had such a good man for their overseer.

He would frequently be very familiar with me, and call me his child; he would tell me that our people were going to get Texas, a fine cotton country, and that he meant to go out there and have a plantation of his own, and I should go with him and be his overseer.

The houses in the "*negro quarters*" were constructed of logs, and from twelve to fifteen feet square; they had no glass, but there were holes to let in the light and air. The furniture consisted of a table, a few stools, and dishes made of wood, and an iron pot, and some other cooking utensils. The houses were placed about three or four rods

apart, with a piece of ground attached to each of them for a garden, where the occupant could raise a few vegetables. The "quarters" were about three hundred yards from the dwelling of the overseer.

The hands were occupied in clearing land and burning brush, and in constructing their houses, through the winter. In March we commenced ploughing, and on the first of April began planting seed for cotton. The hoeing season commenced about the last of May. At the earliest dawn of day, and frequently before that time, the laborers were roused from their sleep by the blowing of the horn. It was blown by the headman of the gang, who led the rest in the work and acted under my direction, as my assistant.

Previous to the blowing of the horn the hands generally rose and eat what was called the "morning's bit," consisting of ham and bread. If exhaustion and fatigue prevented their rising before the dreaded sound of the horn broke upon their slumbers, they had no time to snatch a mouthful, but were hurried out at once.

It was my business to give over to each of the hands his or her appropriate implement of labor, from the tool-house, where they were deposited at night. After all had been supplied, they were

taken to the field, and set at work as soon as it was sufficiently light to distinguish the plants from the grass and weeds. I was employed in passing from row to row, in order to see that the work was well done, and to urge forward the laborers. At 12 o'clock the horn was blown from the overseer's house, calling the hands to dinner, each to his own cabin. The intermission of labor was one hour and a half to hoers and pickers, and two hours to the ploughmen. At the expiration of this interval the horn again summoned them to their labor. They were kept in the field until dark, when they were called home to supper.

There was little leisure for any of the hands on the plantation. In the evenings, after it was too dark for work in the field, the men were frequently employed in burning brush, and in other labors, until late at night. The women, after toiling in the field by day, were compelled to card, spin, and weave cotton for their clothing, in the evening. Even on Sundays there was little or no respite from toil. Those who had not been able to work out all their task during the week were allowed by the overseer to finish it on the Sabbath, and thus save themselves from a whipping on Monday

morning. Those whose tasks were finished frequently employed most of that day in cultivating their gardens.

Many of the female hands were delicate young women, who in Virginia had never been accustomed to field labor. They suffered greatly from the extreme heat and the severity of the toil. Oh! how often have I seen them dragging their weary limbs from the cotton field at nightfall, faint and exhausted. The overseer used to laugh at their sufferings. They were, he said, Virginia ladies, and altogether too delicate for Alabama use; but they must be made to do their tasks notwithstanding. The recollection of these things even now is dreadful. I used to tell the poor creatures, when compelled by the overseer to urge them forward with the whip, that I would much rather take their places and endure the stripes than inflict them.

When but three months old, the children born on the estate were given up to the care of the old women who were not able to work out of doors. Their mothers were kept at work in the field.

It was the object of the overseer to separate me in feeling and interest as widely as possible from my suffering brethren and sisters. I had relations

among the field hands, and used to call them my cousins. He forbid my doing so, and told me if I acknowledged relationship with any of the hands I should be flogged for it. He used to speak of them as devils and hell-hounds, and ridicule them in every possible way; and endeavored to make me speak of them and regard them in the same manner. He would tell long stories about hunting and shooting "runaway niggers," and detail with great apparent satisfaction the cruel and horrid punishments which he had inflicted. One thing he said troubled him. He had once whipped a slave so severely that he died in consequence of it, and it was soon after ascertained that he was wholly innocent of the offence charged against him. That slave, he said, had haunted him ever since.

Soon after we commenced weeding our cotton, some of the hands, who were threatened with a whipping for not finishing their tasks, ran away. The overseer and myself went out after them, taking with us five bloodhounds, which were kept on the estate for the sole purpose of catching runaways. There were no other hounds in the vicinity, and the overseers of the neighboring plantations used to borrow them to hunt their runaways. A

Mr. Crop, who lived about ten miles distant, had two packs, and made it his sole business to catch slaves with them. We used to set the dogs upon the track of the fugitives, and they would follow them until, to save themselves from being torn in pieces, they would climb into a tree, where the dogs kept them until we came up and secured them.

These hounds, when young, are taught to run after the negro boys; and being always kept confined except when let out in pursuit of runaways, they seldom fail of overtaking the fugitive, and seem to enjoy the sport of hunting men as much as other dogs do that of chasing a fox or a deer. My master gave the sum of $500 for his five dogs, a slut and her four puppies.

While going over our cotton picking for the last time, one of our hands, named Little John, ran away. The next evening the dogs were started on his track. We followed them awhile, until we knew by their ceasing to bark that they had found him. We soon met the dogs returning. Their jaws, heads, and feet, were bloody. The overseer looked at them and said "he was afraid the dogs had killed the nigger." It being dark, we could

not find him that night. Early the next morning we started off with our neighbors, Sturtivant and Flincher; and after searching about for some time, we found the body of Little John lying in the midst of a thicket of cane. It was nearly naked, and dreadfully mangled and gashed by the teeth of the dogs. They had evidently dragged it some yards through the thicket: blood, tatters of clothes, and even the entrails of the unfortunate man, were clinging to the stubs of the old and broken cane. Huckstep stooped over his saddle, looked at the body, and muttered an oath. Sturtivant swore it was no more than the fellow deserved. We dug a hole in the cane-brake, where he lay, buried him, and returned home.

The murdered young man had a mother and two sisters on the plantation, by whom he was dearly loved. When I told the old woman of what had befallen her son, she only said that it was better for poor John than to live in slavery.

Late in the fall of this year, a young man, who had already run away several times, was missing from his task. It was four days before we found him. The dogs drove him at last up a tree, where he was caught, and brought home. He was the

fastened down to the ground by means of forked sticks of wood selected for the purpose, the longest fork being driven into the ground until the other closed down upon the neck, ankles, and wrists. The overseer then sent for two large cats belonging to the house. These he placed upon the naked shoulders of his victim, and dragged them suddenly by their tails downward. At first they did not scratch deeply. He then ordered me to strike them with a small stick after he had placed them once more upon the back of the sufferer. I did so; and the enraged animals extended their claws, and tore his back deeply and cruelly as they were dragged along it. He was then whipped and placed in the stocks, where he was kept three days. On the third morning, as I passed the stocks, I stopped to look at him. His head hung down over the chain which supported his neck. I spoke, but he did not answer. *He was dead in the stocks!* The overseer on seeing him seemed surprised, and, I thought, manifested some remorse. Four of the field hands took him out of the stocks and buried him; and every thing went on as usual.

It is not in my power to give a narrative of the daily occurrences on the plantation. The history

of one day was that of all. The gloomy monotony of our slavery was only broken by the overseer's periodical fits of drunkenness, at which times neither life nor limb on the estate were secure from his caprice or violence.

In the spring of 1835, the overseer brought me a letter from my wife, written for her by her young mistress, Mr. Gatewood's daughter. He read it to me. It stated that herself and children were well—spoke of her sad and heavy disappointment in consequence of my not returning with my master, and of her having been told by him that I should come back the next fall.

Hope for a moment lightened my heart, and I indulged the idea of once more returning to the bosom of my family. But I recollected that my master had already cruelly deceived me, and despair again took hold on me.

Among our hands was one whom we used to call Big Harry. He was a stout, athletic man, very intelligent, and an excellent workman; but he was of a high and proud spirit, which the weary and crushing weight of a life of slavery had not been able to subdue. On almost every plantation at the South you may find one or more individuals whose look and air show that they

have preserved their self-respect as *men*;—that with them the power of the tyrant ends with the coercion of the body—that the soul is free, and the inner man retaining the original uprightness of the image of God. You may know them by the stern sobriety of their countenances, and the contempt with which they regard the jests and pastimes of their miserable and degraded companions, who, like Samson, make sport for the keepers of their prison-house. These men are always feared as well as hated by their task-masters. Harry had never been whipped, and had always said that he would die rather than submit to it. He made no secret of his detestation of the overseer. While most of the slaves took off their hats, with cowering submission, in his presence, Harry always refused to do so. He never spoke to him except in a brief answer to his questions. Master George, who knew and dreaded the indomitable spirit of the man, told the overseer, before he left the plantation, to beware how he attempted to punish him. But the habits of tyranny in which Huckstep had so long indulged had accustomed him to abject submission on the part of his subjects, and he could not endure this upright and unbroken manliness. He used frequently to curse

and swear about him, and devise plans for punishing him on account of his impudence, as he called it.

A pretext was at last afforded him. Some time in August of this year there was a large quantity of yellow unpicked cotton lying in the gin house. Harry was employed at night in removing the cotton seed, which had been thrown out by the gin. The rest of the male hands were engaged during the day in weeding the cotton for the last time, and in the night in burning brush on the new lands clearing for the next year's crop. Harry was told one evening to go with the others and assist in burning the brush. He accordingly went; and the next night a double quantity of seed had accumulated in the gin house; and, although he worked until nearly two o'clock in the morning, he could not remove it all.

The next morning the overseer came into the field, and demanded of me why I had not whipped Harry for not removing all the cotton seed. He then called aloud to Harry to come forward and be whipped. Harry answered somewhat sternly that he would neither be struck by overseer nor driver; that he had worked nearly all night, and had scarcely fallen asleep when the horn blew to

summon him to his toil in the field. The overseer raved and threatened, but Harry paid no farther attention to him. He then turned to me and asked me for my pistols, with a pair of which he had furnished me. I told him they were not with me. He growled an oath, threw himself on his horse, and left us. In the evening I found him half drunk and raving like a madman. He said he would no longer bear with that nigger's insolence, but would whip him if it cost him his life. He at length fixed upon a plan for seizing him, and told me that he would go out in the morning, ride along by the side of Harry and talk pleasantly to him, and then, while Harry was attending to him, I was to steal upon him and knock him down, by a blow on the head from the loaded and heavy handle of my whip. I was compelled to promise to obey his directions.

The next morning, when we got to the field, I told Harry of the overseer's plan, and advised him by all means to be on his guard and watch my motions. His eye glistened with gratitude. "Thank you, James," said he; "I 'll take care that you don't touch me."

Huckstep came into the field about ten o'clock. He rode along by the side of Harry, talking and

laughing. I was walking on the other side. When I saw that Harry's eye was upon me, I aimed a blow at him, intending, however, to miss him. He evaded the blow and turned fiercely round with his hoe uplifted, threatening to cut down any one who again attempted to strike him. Huckstep cursed my awkwardness, and told Harry to put down his hoe and come to him. He refused to do so, and swore he would kill the first man who tried to lay hands on him. The cowardly tyrant shrunk away from his enraged bondman, and for two weeks Harry was not again molested.

About the first of September the overseer had one of his drunken fits. He made the house literally an earthly hell. He urged me to drink, quarrelled and swore at me for declining, and chased the old woman round the house with his bottle of peach brandy. He then told me that Harry had forgotten the attempt to seize him, and that in the morning we must try our old game over again.

On the following morning, as I was handing to each of the hands their hoes from the tool-house, I caught Harry's eye. "Look out," said I to him; "Huckstep will be after you again to-day." He

uttered a deep curse against the overseer and passed on to his work. After breakfast Huckstep came riding out to the cotton field. He tied his horse to a tree and came towards us. His sallow and haggard countenance was flushed, and his step unsteady. He came up by the side of Harry and began talking about the crops and the weather. I came at the same time on the other side, and in striking at him beat off his hat. He sprang aside and stepped backwards. Huckstep, with a dreadful oath, commanded him to stop, saying that he had determined to whip him, and neither earth nor hell should prevent him. Harry defied him, and said he had always done the work allotted to him, and that was enough; he would sooner die than have the accursed lash touch him. The overseer staggered to his horse, mounted him and rode furiously to the house, and soon made his appearance, returning, with his gun in his hand.

"Yonder comes the devil!" said one of the women whose row was near Harry's.

"Yes," said another, "he's trying to scare Harry with his gun."

"Let him try as he pleases," said Harry, in his low, deep, determined tones. "He may shoot me, but he can't whip me."

Huckstep came swearing on. When within a few yards of Harry he stopped, looked at him with a stare of mingled rage and drunken imbecility, and bid him throw down his hoe and come forward. The undaunted slave refused to comply, and, continuing his work, told the drunken demon to shoot if he pleased. Huckstep advanced within a few steps of him, when Harry raised his hoe and told him to stand back. He stepped back a few paces, levelled his gun, and fired. Harry received the charge in his breast, and fell instantly across a cotton row. He threw up his hands wildly and groaned, "Oh, Lord!"

The hands instantly dropped their hoes. The women shrieked aloud. For my own part, I stood silent with horror. The cries of the women enraged the overseer. He dropped his gun, and snatching the whip from my hand, with horrid oaths and imprecations, fell to whipping them, laying about him like a maniac. Upon Harry's sister he bestowed his blows without mercy, commanding her to quit her screaming and go to work. The poor girl, whose brother had thus been murdered before her eyes, could not wrestle down the awful agony of her feelings, and the

brutal tormentor left her without effecting his object. He then, without going to look of his victim, told four of the hands to carry him to the house, and, taking up his gun, left the field. When we got to the poor fellow, he was alive, and groaning faintly. The hands took him up, but before they reached the house he was dead. Huckstep came out and looked at him, and, finding him dead, ordered the hands to bury him. The burial of a slave in Alabama is that of a brute: no coffin, no decent shroud, no prayer. A hole is dug, and the body thrown in without further ceremony.

From this time the overseer was regarded by the whole gang with detestation and fear—as a being to whose rage and cruelty there were no limits. Yet he was constantly telling us that he was the kindest of overseers—that he was formerly somewhat severe in managing his hands, but that now he was, if any thing, too indulgent. Indeed he had the reputation of being a good overseer and an excellent manager when sober. The slaves on some of the neighboring plantations were certainly worse clothed and fed, and more frequently and cruelly whipped, than ours. Whenever we saw them they complained of over-

working and short feeding. One of Flincher's and one of Sturtivant's hands ran away while I was in Alabama, and, after remaining in the woods awhile, and despairing of being able to effect their escape, resolved to put an end to their existence and their slavery together. Each twisted himself a vine of the muscadine grape, and fastened one end around the limb of an oak, and made a noose in the other. Jacob, Flincher's man, swung himself off first, and expired after a long struggle. The other, horrified by the contortions and agony of his comrade, dropped his noose, and was retaken. When discovered, two or three days afterwards, the body of Jacob was dreadfully torn and mangled by the obscene buzzards, those winged hyenas and goules of the Southwest.

Among the slaves who were brought from Virginia, were two young and bright mulatto women, who were always understood throughout the plantation to have been the daughters of the elder Larrimore, by one of his slaves. One was named Sarah and the other Hannah. Sarah, being in a state of pregnancy, failed of executing her daily allotted task of hoeing cotton. I was ordered to whip her, and on my remonstrating with the over-

seer, and representing the condition of the woman, I was told that my business was to obey orders, and that if I was told "to whip a dead nigger I must do it." I accordingly gave her fifty lashes. This was on Thursday evening. On Friday she also failed through weakness, and was compelled to lie down in the field. That night the overseer himself whipped her. On Saturday the wretched woman dragged herself once more to the cotton field. In the burning sun, and in a situation which would have called forth pity in the bosom of any one save a cotton-growing overseer, she struggled to finish her task. She failed—nature could do no more—and, sick and despairing, she sought her cabin. There the overseer met her and inflicted fifty more lashes upon her already lacerated back.

The next morning was the Sabbath. It brought no joy to that suffering woman. Instead of the tones of the church bell summoning to the house of prayer, she heard the dreadful sound of the lash falling upon the backs of her brethren and sisters in bondage. For the voice of prayer she heard curses; for the songs of Zion obscene and hateful blasphemies. No Bible was there with its consolations for the sick of heart. Faint and fevered,

scarred and smarting from the effects of her cruel punishment, she lay upon her pallet of moss, dreading the coming of her relentless persecutor, who, in the madness of one of his periodical fits of drunkenness, was now swearing and cursing through the quarters,—the demon of that Sabbathless hell.

Some of the poor woman's friends on the evening before had attempted to relieve her of the task which had been assigned her, but exhausted nature and the selfishness induced by their own miserable situation did not permit them to finish it; and the overseer, on examination, found that the week's work of the woman was still deficient. After breakfast, he ordered her to be tied up to the limb of a tree, by means of a rope fastened round her wrists, so as to leave her feet about six inches from the ground. She begged him to let her down, for she was very sick.

"Very well!" he exclaimed, with a sneer and a laugh; "I shall bleed you then, and take out some of your Virginia blood. You are too proud a miss for Alabama."

He struck her a few blows. Swinging thus by her arms, she succeeded in placing one of her feet

against the body of the tree, and thus partly supported herself, and relieved in some degree the painful weight upon her wrists. He threw down his whip, took a rail from the garden fence, ordered her feet to be tied together, and thrust the rail between them. He then ordered one of the hands to sit upon it. Her back at this time was bare, but the strings of the only garment which she wore passed over her shoulders and prevented the full force of the whip from acting on her flesh. These he cut off with his penknife, and thus left her entirely naked. He struck her only two blows, for the second one cut open her side and abdomen with a frightful gash. Unable to look on any longer in silence, I entreated him to stop, as I feared he had killed her. The overseer looked at the wound, dropped his whip, and ordered her to be untied. She was carried into the house in a state of insensibility, and died in three days after.

During the whole season of picking cotton, the whip was frequently and severely plied. In his seasons of intoxication, the overseer made no distinction between the stout man and the feeble and delicate woman—the sick and the well. Women in a far advanced state of pregnancy were driven

out to the cotton field. At other times he seemed to have some consideration, and to manifest something like humanity. Our hands did not suffer for food—they had a good supply of ham and corn-meal; while on Flincher's plantation the slaves had meat but once a year, at Christmas.

Near the commencement of the weeding season of 1835, I was ordered to whip a young woman, a light mustee, for not performing her task. I told the overseer that she was sick. He said he did not care for that; she should be made to work. A day or two afterwards, I found him in the house half intoxicated. He demanded of me why I had not whipped the girl; and I gave the same reason as before. He flew into a dreadful rage, but his miserable situation made him an object of contempt rather than fear. He sat shaking his fist at me and swearing for nearly half an hour. He said he would teach the Virginia lady to sham sickness; and that the only reason I did not whip her was that she was a white woman, and I did not like to cut up her delicate skin. Some time after I was ordered to give two of our women, named Hannah and Big Sarah, 150 lashes each, for not performing their tasks. The overseer stood by until he

saw Hannah whipped, and until Sarah had been tied up to the tree. As soon as his back was turned I struck the tree instead of the woman, who, understanding my object, shrieked as if the whip at every blow was cutting into her flesh. The overseer heard the blows and the woman's cries, and, supposing that all was going on according to his mind, left the field. Unfortunately the husband of Hannah stood looking on, and, indignant that his wife should be whipped and Sarah spared, determined to revenge himself by informing against me.

Next morning Huckstep demanded of me whether I had whipped Sarah the day before; I replied in the affirmative. Upon this he called Sarah forward and made her show her back, which bore no traces of recent whipping. He then turned upon me and told me that the blows intended for Sarah should be laid on my back. That night the overseer, with the help of three of the hands, tied me up to a large tree—my arms and legs being clasped round it, and my body drawn up hard against it by two men pulling at my arms, and one pushing against my back. The agony occasioned by this alone was almost intolerable. I felt a sense of

painful suffocation, and could scarcely catch my breath.

A moment after I felt the first blow of the overseer's whip across my shoulders. It seemed to cut into my very heart. I felt the blood gush and run down my back. I fainted at length under the torture, and on being taken down my shoes were filled with the blood which ran from the gashes in my back. The skin was worn off from my breast, arms, and thighs, against the rough bark of the tree. I was sick and feverish, and in great pain, for three weeks afterwards; most of which time I was obliged to lie with my face downwards, in consequence of the extreme soreness of my sides and back. Huckstep himself seemed concerned about me, and would come frequently to see me, and tell me that he should not have touched me had it not been for "the cursed peach brandy."

Almost the first person that I was compelled to whip, after I recovered, was the man who pushed at my back when I was tied up to the tree. The hands who were looking on at that time all thought he pushed me much harder than was necessary; and they expected that I would retaliate upon him the injury I had received. After he was tied up,

the overseer told me to give him a severe flogging, and left me. I struck the tree instead of the man. His wife, who was looking on, almost overwhelmed me with her gratitude.

At length one morning, late in the fall of 1835, I saw Huckstep and a gentleman ride out to the field. As they approached, I saw the latter was my master. The hands all ceased their labor, and crowded around him, inquiring about old Virginia. For my own part, I could not hasten to greet him. He had too cruelly deceived me. He at length came towards me, and seemed somewhat embarrassed. "Well, James," said he, "how do you stand it here?" "Badly enough," I replied. "I had no thought that you could be so cruel as to go away and leave me as you did." "Well, well, it was too bad, but it could not be helped; you must blame Huckstep for it." "But," said I, "I was not his servant; I belonged to you, and you could do as you pleased." "Well," said he, "we will talk about that by and by." He then inquired of Huckstep where Big Sarah was. "She was sick and died," was the answer. He looked round among the slaves again, and inquired for Harry. The overseer told him that Harry undertook to

kill him, and that, to save his life, he was obliged to fire upon him, and that he died of the wound. After some further inquiries, he requested me to go into the house with him. He then asked me to tell him how things had been managed during his absence. I gave him a full account of the overseer's cruelty. When he heard of the manner of Harry's death, he seemed much affected and shed tears. He was a favorite servant of his father's. I showed him the deep scars on my back occasioned by the whipping I had received. He was, or professed to be, highly indignant with Huckstep; and said he would see to it that he did not lay hands on me again. He told me he should be glad to take me with him to Virginia, but he did not know where he should find a driver who would be so kind to the hands as I was. If I would stay ten years, he would then give me a thousand dollars, and a piece of land to plant on my own account. "But," said I, "my wife and children." "Well," said he, "I will do my best to purchase them, and send them on to you." I now saw that my destiny was fixed, and that I was to spend my days in Alabama, and I retired to my bed that evening with a heavy heart.

My master staid only three or four days on the plantation. Before he left, he cautioned Huckstep to be careful and not strike me again, as he would on no account permit it. He told him to give the hands food enough, and not over-work them, and, having thus satisfied his conscience, left us to our fate.

Out of the two hundred and fourteen slaves who were brought out from Virginia, at least one-third of them were members of the Methodist and Baptist churches in that State. Of this number five or six could read. They had been torn away from the care and discipline of their respective churches, and from the means of instruction, but they retained their love for the exercises of religion, and felt a mournful pleasure in speaking of the privileges and spiritual blessings which they enjoyed in Old Virginia. Three of them had been preachers, or exhorters, viz. Solomon, usually called uncle Solomon, Richard, and David. Uncle Solomon was a grave, elderly man, mild and forgiving in his temper, and greatly esteemed among the more serious portion of our hands. He used to snatch every occasion to talk to the lewd and vicious about the concerns of their souls,

and advise them to fix their minds upon the Savior, as their only helper. Some I have heard curse and swear in answer, and others would say that they could not keep their minds upon God and the devil (meaning Huckstep) at the same time: that it was of no use to try to be religious—they had no time—that the overseer wouldn't let them meet to pray—and that even uncle Solomon, when he prayed, had to keep one eye open all the time, to see if Huckstep was coming. Uncle Solomon could both read and write, and had brought out with him from Virginia a Bible, a hymn-book, and some other religious books, which he carefully concealed from the overseer. Huckstep was himself an open infidel as well as blasphemer. He used to tell the hands that there was no hell hereafter for white people, but that they had their punishment on earth in being obliged to take care of the negroes. As for the blacks, he was sure there was a hell for them. He used frequently to sit with his bottle by his side, and his Bible in his hand, and read passages and comment on them, and pronounce them lies. Any thing like religious feeling among the slaves irritated him. He said that so much praying and sing-

ing prevented the people from doing their tasks, as it kept them up nights, when they should be asleep. He used to mock, and in every possible way interrupt the poor slaves, who, after the toil of the day, knelt in their lowly cabins to offer their prayers and supplications to Him whose ear is open to the sorrowful sighing of the prisoner, and who hath promised in his own time to come down and deliver. In his drunken seasons he would make excursions at night through the slave-quarters, enter the cabins, and frighten the inmates, especially if engaged in prayer or psalm-singing. On one of these occasions he came back rubbing his hands and laughing. He said he had found uncle Solomon in his garden, down on his knees, praying like an old owl, and had tipped him over and frightened him half out of his wits. At another time he found uncle David sitting on his stool with his face thrust up the chimney, in order that his voice might not be heard by his brutal persecutor. He was praying, giving utterance to these words, probably in reference to his bondage: —"*How long, oh Lord, how long?*" "As long as my whip!" cried the overseer, who had stolen

behind him, giving him a blow. It was the sport of a demon.

Not long after my master had left us, the overseer ascertained for the first time that some of the hands could read, and that they had brought books with them from Virginia. He compelled them to give up the keys of their chests, and on searching found several Bibles and hymn-books. Uncle Solomon's chest contained quite a library, which he could read at night by the light of knots of the pitch-pine. These books he collected together, and in the evening called uncle Solomon into the house. After jeering him for some time, he gave him one of the Bibles and told him to name his text and preach him a sermon. The old man was silent. He then made him get upon the table, and ordered him to pray. Uncle Solomon meekly replied that "forced prayer was not good for soul or body." The overseer then knelt down himself, and in a blasphemous manner prayed that the Lord would send his spirit into uncle Solomon, or else let the old man fall from the table and break his neck, and so have an end of "nigger" preaching. On getting up from his knees he went to the cupboard, poured out a glass

of brandy for himself, and brought another to the table. "James," said he, addressing me, "uncle Solomon stands there, for all the world, like a Hickory Quaker. His spirit don't move; I 'll see if another spirit won't move it." He compelled the old preacher to swallow the brandy, and then told him to preach and exhort, for the spirit was in him. He set one of the Bibles on fire, and after it was consumed mixed up the ashes of it in a glass of water, and compelled the old man to drink it, telling him that as the spirit and the word were now both in him, there was no longer any excuse for not preaching. After tormenting the wearied old man in this way until nearly midnight, he permitted him to go to his quarters.

The next day I saw uncle Solomon, and talked with him about his treatment. He said it would not always be so—that slavery was to come to an end, for the Bible said so—that there would then be no more whippings and fightings, but the lion and the lamb would lie down together, and all would be love. He said he prayed for Huckstep —that it was not he, but the devil in him, who behaved so. At his request, I found means to get him a Bible and a hymn-book from the overseer's

room, and the old man ever afterwards kept them concealed in the hen-house.

The weeding season of 1836 was marked by repeated acts of cruelty on the part of Huckstep. One of the hands, Priscilla, was, owing to her delicate situation, unable to perform her daily task. He ordered her to be tied up against a tree, in the same manner that I had been. In this situation she was whipped until *she was delivered of a dead infant at the foot of the tree!* Our men took her upon a sheet and carried her to the house, where she lay sick for several months, but finally recovered. I have heard him repeatedly laugh at the circumstance.

Not long after this, we were surprised, one morning about ten o'clock, by hearing the horn blown at the house. Presently aunt Polly came screaming into the field. "What is the matter, Aunty?" I inquired. "Oh Lor!" said she, "old Huckstep 's pitched off his horse and broke his head, and is e'en about dead."

"Thank God!" said Little Simon; "the devil will have him at last."

"God-amighty be praised!" exclaimed half a dozen others.

The hands, with one accord, dropped their hoes,

and crowded round the old woman, asking questions: "Is he dead?" "Will he die?" "Did you feel of him—was he cold?"

Aunt Polly explained, as well as she could, that Huckstep, in a state of partial intoxication, had attempted to leap his horse over a fence, had fallen and cut a deep gash in his head, and that he was now lying insensible.

It is impossible to describe the effect produced by this news among the hands. Men, women, and children shouted, clapped their hands, and laughed aloud. Some cursed the overseer, and others thanked the Lord for taking him away. Little Simon got down on his knees, and called loudly upon God to finish his work, and never let the overseer again enter a cotton field. "Let him die, Lord," said he, "let him die; he's killed enough of us. Oh, good Lord, let him die and not live."

"Peace, peace! it is a bad spirit," said uncle Solomon; "God himself willeth not the death of a sinner."

I followed the old woman to the house, and found Huckstep at the foot of one of those trees, so common at the South, called the Pride of China. His face was black, and there was a frightful con-

tusion on the side of his head. He was carried into the house, where, on my bleeding him, he revived. He lay in great pain for several days, and it was nearly three weeks before he was able to come out to the cotton fields.

On returning to the field, after Huckstep had revived, I found the hands sadly disappointed to hear that he was still living. Some of them fell to cursing and swearing, and were enraged with me for trying to save his life. Little Simon said I was a fool; if he had bled him he would have done it to some purpose. He would, at least, have so disabled his arm that he would never again try to swing a whip. Uncle Solomon remonstrated with Simon, and told me that I had done right.

The neighboring overseers used frequently to visit Huckstep, and he, in turn, visited them. I was sometimes present during their interviews, and heard them tell each other stories of horse-racing, negro huntings, &c. Some time during this season, Ludlow, who was overseer of a plantation about eight miles from ours, told of a slave of his, named Thornton, who had twice attempted to escape with his wife and one child. The first time he was caught without much difficulty, chain-

ed to the overseer's horse, and in that way brought back. The poor man, to save his wife from a beating, laid all the blame upon himself, and said that his wife had no wish to escape, and tried to prevent him from attempting it. He was severely whipped; but soon ran away again, and was again arrested. The overseer, Ludlow, said he was determined to put a stop to the runaway, and accordingly had resort to a somewhat unusual method of punishment.

There is a great scarcity of good water in that section of Alabama; and you will generally see a large cistern attached to the corners of the houses to catch water for washing, &c. Underneath this cistern is frequently a tank from eight to ten feet deep, into which, when the former is full, the water is permitted to run. From this tank the water is pumped out for use. Into one of these tanks the unfortunate slave was placed, and confined by one of his ankles to the bottom of it, and the water was suffered to flow in from above. He was compelled to pump out the water as fast as it came in, by means of a long rod or handle connected with the pump above ground. He was not allowed to begin until the water had risen to his middle. Any

pause or delay after this, from weakness and exhaustion, would have been fatal, as the water would have risen above his head. In this horrible dungeon, toiling for his life, he was kept for twenty-four hours without any sustenance. Even Huckstep said that this was too bad; that he had himself formerly punished runaways in that way, but should not do it again.

I rejoice to be able to say that this sufferer has at last escaped, with his wife and child, into a free State. He was assisted by some white men, but I do not know all the particulars of his escape.

Our overseer had not been long able to ride about the plantation, after his accident, before his life was again endangered. He found two of the hands, Little Jarret and Simon, fighting with each other, and attempted to chastise both of them. Jarret bore it patiently, but Simon turned upon him, seized a stake or pin from a cart near by, and felled him to the ground. The overseer got up, went to the house, and told aunt Polly that he had nearly been killed by the "niggers," and requested her to tie up his head, from which the blood was streaming. As soon as this was done, he took down his gun, and went out in pursuit of Simon, who had fled to his cabin, to get some things which he supposed

necessary previous to attempting his escape from the plantation. He was just stepping out of the door when he met the enraged overseer with his gun in his hand. Not a word was spoken by either. Huckstep raised his gun and fired. The man fell without a groan across the door-sill. He rose up twice on his hands and knees, but died in a few minutes. He was dragged off and buried. The overseer told me that there was no other way to deal with such a fellow. It was Alabama law, if a slave resisted, to shoot him at once. He told me of a case which occurred in 1834, on a plantation about ten miles distant, and adjoining that where Crop, the negro hunter, boarded with his hounds. The overseer had bought some slaves at Selma, from a drove or coffle passing through that place. They proved very refractory. He whipped three of them, and undertook to whip a fourth, who was from Maryland. The man raised his hoe in a threatening manner, and the overseer fired upon him. The slave fell, but instantly rose up on his hands and knees, and was beaten down again by the stock of the overseer's gun. The wounded wretch raised himself once more, drew a knife from the waistband of his pantaloons, and, catching hold of the overseer's coat, raised himself

high enough to inflict a fatal wound upon the latter. Both fell together, and 'died immediately after.

Nothing more of special importance occurred until July, of last year, when one of our men, named John, was whipped three times for not performing his task. On the last day of the month, after his third whipping, he ran away. On the following morning, I found that he was missing at his row. The overseer said we must hunt him up; and he blew the "nigger horn," as it is called, for the dogs. This horn was only used when we went out in pursuit of fugitives. It is a cow's horn, and makes a short, loud sound. We crossed Flincher's and Goldsby's plantations, as the dogs had got upon John's track, and went off barking in that direction, and the two overseers joined us in the chase. The dogs soon caught sight of the runaway, and compelled him to climb a tree. We came up; Huckstep ordered him down, and secured him upon my horse by tying him to my back. On reaching home he was stripped entirely naked and lashed up to a tree. Flincher then volunteered to whip him on one side of his legs and Goldsby on the other. I had, in the mean time, been order-

ed to prepare a wash of salt and pepper, and wash his wounds with it. The poor fellow groaned, and his flesh shrunk and quivered as the burning solution was applied to it. This wash, while it adds to the immediate torment of the sufferer, facilitates the cure of the wounded parts. Huckstep then whipped him from his neck down to his thighs, making the cuts lengthwise of his back. He was very expert with the whip, and could strike, at any time, within an inch of his mark. He then gave the whip to me and told me to strike directly across his back. When I had finished, the miserable sufferer, from his neck to his heels, was covered with blood and bruises. Goldsby and Flincher now turned to Huckstep, and told him that I deserved a whipping as much as John did; that they had known me frequently disobey his orders, and that I was partial to the "Virginia ladies," and didn't whip them as I did the men. They said if I was a driver of theirs they would know what to do with me. Huckstep agreed with them; and after directing me to go to the house and prepare more of the wash for John's back, he called after me, with an oath, to see to it that I had some for myself, for he meant to give me, at least,

two hundred and fifty lashes. I returned to the house, and, scarcely conscious of what I was doing, filled an iron vessel with water, put in the salt and pepper, and placed it over the embers.

As I stood by the fire watching the boiling of the mixture, and reflecting upon the dreadful torture to which I was about to be subjected, the thought of *escape* flashed upon my mind. The chance was a desperate one, but I resolved to attempt it. I ran up stairs, tied my shirt in a handkerchief, and stepped out of the back door of the house, telling aunt Polly to take care of the wash at the fire until I returned. The sun was about one hour high, but, luckily for me, the hands, as well as the three overseers, were on the other side of the house. I kept the house between them and myself, and ran as fast as I could for the woods. On reaching them I found myself obliged to proceed slowly, as there was a thick undergrowth of cane and reeds. Night came on; I straggled forward by a dim starlight, amidst vines and reed-beds. About midnight the horizon began to be overcast, and the darkness increased, until, in the thick forest, I could scarcely see a yard before me. Fearing that I might lose my way and wander

towards the plantation, instead of from it, I resolved to wait until day. I laid down upon a little hillock and fell asleep.

When I awoke it was broad day. The clouds had vanished, and the hot sunshine fell through the trees upon my face. I started up, realizing my situation, and darted onward. My object was to reach the great road by which we had travelled when we came out from Virginia. I had, however, very little hope of escape. I knew that a hot pursuit would be made after me, and what I most dreaded was that the overseer would procure Crop's bloodhounds to follow my track. If only the hounds of our plantation were sent after me, I had hopes of being able to make friends of them, as they were always good-natured and obedient to me. I travelled until, as near as I could judge, about ten o'clock, when a distant sound startled me. I stopped and listened. It was the deep bay of the bloodhound, apparently at a great distance. I hurried on until I came to a creek about fifteen yards wide, skirted by an almost impenetrable growth of reeds and cane. Plunging into it, I swam across and ran down by the side of it a short distance, and, in order to baffle the dogs,

swam back to the other side again. I stopped in the reed-bed and listened. The dogs seemed close at hand, and by the loud barking I felt persuaded that Crop's hounds were with them. I thought of the fate of Little John, who had been torn in pieces by the hounds, and of the scarcely less dreadful condition of those who had escaped the dogs only to fall into the hands of the overseer. The yell of the dogs grew louder. Escape seemed impossible. I ran down to the creek with a determination to drown myself. I plunged into the water and went down to the bottom, but the dreadful strangling sensation compelled me to struggle up to the surface. Again I heard the yell of the bloodhounds, and again desperately plunged down into the water. As I went down I opened my mouth, and, choked and gasping, I found myself once more struggling upward. As I rose to the top of the water and caught a glimpse of the sunshine and the trees, the love of life revived in me. I swam to the other side of the creek, and forced my way through the reeds to a large bass-wood tree, and stood under one of its lowest limbs, ready, in case of necessity, to spring up into it. Here, panting and exhausted, I stood waiting for the dogs.

The woods seemed full of them. I heard a bell tinkle, and, a moment after, our old hound Venus came bounding through the cane, dripping wet from the creek. As the old hound came towards me, I called to her as I used to do when out hunting with her. She stopped suddenly, looked up at me, and then came wagging her tail and fawning around me. A moment after the other dogs came up hot in the chase, and with their noses to the ground. I called to them, but they did not look up, but came yelling on. I was just about to spring into the tree to avoid them, when Venus, the old hound, met them, and stopped them. They then all came fawning and playing and jumping about me. The very creatures whom a moment before I had feared would tear me limb from limb, were now leaping and licking my hands, and rolling on the leaves around me. I listened awhile in the fear of hearing the voices of men following the dogs, but there was no sound in the forest save the gurgling of the sluggish waters of the creek, and the chirp of black squirrels in the trees. I took courage and started onward once more, taking the dogs with me. The bell on the neck of the old dog I feared might betray me, and, unable to get

it off her neck, I twisted some of the long moss of the trees around it, so as to prevent its ringing. At night I halted once more with the dogs by my side. Harassed with fear, and tormented with hunger, I laid down and tried to sleep. But the dogs were uneasy, and would start up and bark at the cries or the footsteps of wild animals, and I was obliged to use my utmost exertions to keep them quiet, fearing that their barking would draw my pursuers upon me. I slept but little, and as soon as daylight started forward again. The next day towards evening I reached a great road, which, I rejoiced to find, was the same which my master and myself had travelled on our way to Greene County. I now thought it best to get rid of the dogs, and accordingly started them in pursuit of a deer. They went off, yelling on the track, and I never saw them again. I remembered that my master told me, near this place, that we were in the Creek country, and that there were some Indian settlements not far distant. In the course of the evening I crossed the road, and, striking into a path through the woods, soon came to a number of Indian cabins. I went into one of them and begged for some food. The Indian women received me with a great deal of kindness, and gave

me a good supper of venison, corn-bread, and stewed pumpkin. I remained with them till the evening of the next day, when I started afresh on my journey. I kept on the road leading to Georgia. In the latter part of the night I entered into a long low bottom, heavily timbered, sometimes called Wolf Valley. It was a dreary and frightful place. As I walked on, I heard on all sides the howling of the wolves, and the quick patter of their feet on the leaves and sticks, as they ran through the woods. At daylight I laid down, but had scarcely closed my eyes when I was roused up by the wolves snarling and howling around me. I started on my feet and saw several of them running by me. I did not again close my eyes during the whole day. In the afternoon, a bear with her two cubs came to a large chestnut tree near where I lay. She crept up the tree, went out on one of the limbs, and broke off several twigs in trying to shake down the nuts. They were not ripe enough to fall, and, after several vain attempts to procure some of them, she crawled down the tree again and went off with her young.

The day was long and tedious. As soon as it was dark I once more resumed my journey; but fatigue and the want of food and sleep rendered

me almost incapable of further effort. It was not long before I fell asleep, while walking, and wandered out of the road. I was wakened by a bunch of moss which hung down from the limb of a tree and met my face. I looked up and saw, as I thought, a large man standing just before me. My first idea was that some one had struck me over the face, and that I had been at last overtaken by Huckstep. Rubbing my eyes once more, I saw the figure before me sink down upon its hands and knees; another glance assured me that it was a bear, and not a man. He passed across the road and disappeared. This adventure kept me awake for the remainder of the night. Towards morning I passed by a plantation, on which was a fine growth of peach-trees, full of ripe fruit. I took as many of them as I could conveniently carry in my hands and pockets, and, retiring a little distance into the woods, laid down and slept till evening, when I again went forward.

Sleeping thus by day and travelling by night, in a direction towards the North star, I entered Georgia. As I only travelled in the night-time, I was unable to recognise rivers and places which I had seen before, until I reached Columbus, where I recollected I had been with my master. From

this place I took the road leading to Washington, and passed directly through that village. On leaving the village, I found myself, contrary to my expectation, in an open country, with no woods in view. I walked on until day broke in the east. At a considerable distance ahead, I saw a group of trees, and hurried on towards it. Large and beautiful plantations were on each side of me, from which I could hear dogs bark, and the driver's horn sounding. On reaching the trees, I found that they afforded but a poor place of concealment; on either hand, through its openings, I could see the men turning out to the cotton fields. I found a place to lie down between two oak stumps, around which the new shoots had sprung up thickly, forming a comparatively close shelter. After eating some peaches, which since leaving the Indian settlement had constituted my sole food, I fell asleep. I was waked by the barking of a dog. Raising my head and looking through the bushes, I found that the dog was barking at a black squirrel who was chattering on a limb almost directly above me. A moment after, I heard a voice speaking to the dog, and soon saw a man, with a gun in his hand, stealing through the wood. He passed close to the stumps, where I lay trembling with

terror lest he should discover me. He kept his eye, however, upon the tree, and, raising his gun, fired. The squirrel dropped dead close by my side. I saw that any further attempt at concealment would be in vain, and sprang upon my feet. The man started forward on seeing me, struck at me with his gun, and beat my hat off. I leaped into the road, and he followed after, swearing he would shoot me if I didn't stop. Knowing that his gun was not loaded, I paid no attention to him, but ran across the road into a cotton field where there was a great gang of slaves working. The man with the gun followed, and called to the two colored drivers, who were on horseback, to ride after me and stop me. I saw a large piece of woodland at some distance ahead, and directed my course towards it. Just as I reached it, I looked back and saw my pursuer far behind me, and found, to my great joy, that the two drivers had not followed me. I got behind a tree, and soon heard the man enter the woods and pass me. After all had been still for more than an hour, I crept into a low place in the depth of the woods, and laid down amidst a bed of reeds, where I again fell asleep. Towards evening, on awaking, I

found the sky beginning to be cloudy, and before night set in it was completely overcast. Having lost my hat, I tied an old handkerchief over my head, and prepared to resume my journey. It was foggy and very dark, and, involved as I was in the mazes of the forest, I did not know in what direction I was going. I wandered on until I reached a road, which I supposed to be the same one which I had left. The next day the weather was still dark and rainy, and continued so for several days. During this time I slept only by leaning against the body of a tree, as the ground was soaked with rain. On the fifth night after my adventure near Washington, the clouds broke away, and the clear moonlight and the stars shone down upon me.

I looked up to see the North star, which I supposed still before me. But I sought it in vain in all that quarter of the heavens. A dreadful thought came over me that I had been travelling out of my way. I turned round and saw the North star, which had been shining directly upon my back. I then knew that I had been travelling away from freedom, and towards the place of my captivity, ever since I left the woods into which I

had been pursued on the 21st, five days before. Oh, the keen and bitter agony of that moment! I sat down on the decaying trunk of a fallen tree, and wept like a child. Exhausted in mind and body, nature came at last to my relief, and I fell asleep upon the log. When I awoke it was still dark. I rose and nerved myself for another effort for freedom. Taking the North star for my guide, I turned upon my track, and left once more the dreaded frontiers of Alabama behind me. The next night, after crossing a considerable river, I came to a large road crossing the one on which I travelled, and which seemed to lead more directly towards the North. I took this road, and the next night after I came to a large village. Passing through the main street, I saw a large hotel which I at once recollected. I was in Augusta, and this was the hotel at which my master had spent several days when I was with him on one of his southern visits. I heard the guards patrolling the town cry the hour of twelve; and, fearful of being taken up, I turned out of the main street, and got upon the road leading to Petersburg. On reaching the latter place, I swam over the Savannah river into South Carolina, and from thence passed into North Carolina.

Hitherto I had lived mainly upon peaches, which were plenty on almost all the plantations in Alabama and Georgia; but the season was now too far advanced for them, and I was obliged to resort to apples. These I obtained without much difficulty until within two or three days' journey of the Virginia line. At this time I had had nothing to eat but two or three small and sour apples for twenty-four hours, and I waited impatiently for night, in the hope of obtaining fruit from the orchards along the road. I passed by several plantations, but found no apples. After midnight, I passed near a large house, with fruit-trees around it. I searched under and climbed up and shook several of them to no purpose. At last I found a tree on which there were a few apples. On shaking it, half a dozen fell. I got down, and went groping and feeling about for them in the grass, but could find only two; the rest were devoured by several hogs, who were there on the same errand with myself. I pursued my way until day was about breaking, when I passed another house. The feeling of extreme hunger was here so intense, that it required all the resolution I was master of to keep myself from going up to the house and breaking into it in search of food. But the thought

of being again made a slave, and of suffering the horrible punishment of a runaway, restrained me. I lay in the woods all that day without food. The next evening, I soon found a large pile of excellent apples, from which I supplied myself.

The next evening I reached Halifax Court House, and I then knew that I was near Virginia. On the 7th of October, I came to the Roanoke, and crossed it in the midst of a violent storm of rain and thunder. The current ran so furiously that I was carried down with it, and with great difficulty, and in a state of complete exhaustion, reached the opposite shore.

At about 2 o'clock, on the night of the 15th, I approached Richmond; but not daring to go into the city at that hour, on account of the patrols, I lay in the woods near Manchester, until the next evening, when I started in the twilight, in order to enter before the setting of the watch. I passed over the bridge unmolested, although in great fear, as my tattered clothes and naked head were well calculated to excite suspicion; and, being well acquainted with the localities of the city, made my way to the house of a friend. I was received with the utmost kindness, and welcomed as one risen from the dead. Oh, how inexpressibly sweet were

the tones of human sympathy, after the dreadful trials to which I had been subjected, the wrongs and outrages which I witnessed and suffered! For between two and three months I had not spoken with a human being, and the sound even of my own voice now seemed strange to my ears. During this time, save in two or three instances, I had tasted of no food except peaches and apples. I was supplied with some dried meat and coffee, but the first mouthful occasioned nausea and faintness. I was compelled to take my bed, and lay sick for several days. By the assiduous attention and kindness of my friends, I was supplied with every thing which was necessary during my sickness. I was detained in Richmond nearly a month. As soon as I had sufficiently recovered to be able to proceed on my journey, I bade my kind host and his wife an affectionate farewell, and set forward once more towards a land of freedom. I longed to visit my wife and children in Powhatan County, but the dread of being discovered prevented me from attempting it. I had learned from my friends in Richmond that they were living and in good health, but greatly distressed on my account.

My friends had provided me with a fur cap, and with as much lean ham, cake, and biscuit as I could conveniently carry. I proceeded in the same way as before, travelling by night and lying close and sleeping by day. About the last of November I reached the Shenandoah river. It was very cold; ice had already formed along the margin, and in swimming the river I was chilled through; and my clothes froze about me soon after I had reached the opposite side. I passed into Maryland, and on the 5th of December stepped across the line which divided the free state of Pennsylvania from the land of slavery.

I had a few shillings in money, which were given me at Richmond, and after travelling nearly twenty-four hours from the time I crossed the line, I ventured to call at a tavern and buy a dinner. On reaching Carlisle, I inquired of the ostler in a stable if he knew of any one who wished to hire a house-servant or coachman. He said he did not. Some more colored people came in, and, taking me aside, told me that they knew that I was from Virginia, by my pronunciation of certain words—that I was probably a runaway slave—but that I need not be alarmed, as they were friends,

and would do all in their power to protect me. I was taken home by one of them, and treated with the utmost kindness; and at night he took me in a wagon, and carried me some distance on my way to Harrisburg, where he said I should meet with friends.

He told me that I had better go directly to Philadelphia, as there would be less danger of my being discovered and retaken there than in the country, and there were a great many persons there who would exert themselves to secure me from the slave-holders. In parting he cautioned me against conversing or stopping with any man on the road, unless he wore a plain, straight collar on a round coat, and said "thee" and "thou." By following his directions I arrived safely in Philadelphia, having been kindly entertained and assisted on my journey by several benevolent gentlemen and ladies, whose compassion for the wayworn and hunted stranger I shall never forget, and whose names will always be dear to me. On reaching Philadelphia, I was visited by a large number of the Abolitionists, and friends of the colored people, who, after hearing my story, thought it would not be safe for me to remain in any part of the United

States. I remained in Philadelphia a few days, and then a gentleman came on to New York with me, I being considered on board the steam-boat, and in the cars, as his servant. I arrived at New York on the 1st of January. The sympathy and kindness which I have every where met with since leaving the slave states, has been the more grateful to me because it was in a great measure unexpected. The slaves are always told that if they escape into a free state they will be seized and put in prison until their masters send for them. I had heard Huckstep and the other overseers occasionally speak of the Abolitionists, but I did not know or dream that they were the friends of the slave. Oh, if the miserable men and women, now toiling on the plantations of Alabama, could know that thousands in the free states are praying and striving for their deliverance, how would the glad tidings be whispered from cabin to cabin, and how would the slave-mother, as she watches over her infant, bless God, on her knees, for the hope that this child of her day of sorrow might never realize, in stripes, and toil, and grief unspeakable, what it is to be a slave!

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

The reader may perhaps feel a curiosity to know something further of James Williams, and whether he has found a place of security from the hunters of human chattels at the South. He came to New York on the 1st of the 1st mo., 1838. He was taken to the house of a true friend of the oppressed, where he was received and entertained with much sympathy and kindness. While in this city he was visited by a large number of gentlemen, who were deeply interested in his narrative. An accurate and striking sketch of his face was made by an eminent artist, the engraving of which, by Patrick Reason, a colored young gentleman of this city, is prefixed to this volume. He had, however, been in his asylum but a few days, when information was received that two white men were in pursuit of him, accompanied by a colored man, who knew James, and would be able at once to recognise him. The informant stated that they had been as far as Boston, and

had just returned to this city. After consultation, his friends came to the conclusion that he would not be safe in any part of the United States, and that, in the present unsettled state of the Canadas, it would be best to send him to England. He accordingly sailed for Liverpool, with the best wishes and sympathies of all who had an opportunity of hearing his story.

It is with deep humiliation and sorrow that we are thus compelled to proclaim to the world, that even the nominally free states of America afford no protection to the man of color, escaping from a land of slavery. Even the soil which is yet greener for the blood of the revolutionary sacrifice —the plains of Lexington and Saratoga—may not be trodden in safety by the scarred and toil-worn fugitive from Southern Slavery. Rome had her temples where the slave could flee and be secure, for the master dared not violate his sanctuary. But America has no place too sacred for the profaning presence of slavery. It pervades the whole land,—an active and almost omnipresent despotism. The weary stranger may be plucked away from the domestic fireside, or dragged from the very horns of the altars of religion. The whole

constabulary and municipal force of the country, the entire civil and military authority, are pledged, by the constitution itself, to aid the master in recovering his runaway slaves. Judges, sheriffs, constables, and citizens of the free states, are bound by the constitutional law of the land to hunt men like wild beasts, for no other crime than that of preferring freedom to bondage. Better would it be to forego, at once, this mockery of freedom, and wear the acknowledged chains of slavery ourselves, than thus to stand ready at the beck of our masters to howl in the track of the fugitive, in concert with the trained bloodhounds of the South.

APPENDIX.

In our prefatory remarks we adduced only the testimony of inveterate and determined advocates of slavery. In corroboration of the facts stated by James Williams, we offer now the testimony of several gentlemen, who are natives of the South, or have been residents in that section of the country.

Discussion in Lane Seminary, 2d Mo., 1834.

A member from Alabama, speaking of the cruelties practised upon the slaves, said—"At our house it is so common to hear their screams from a neighboring plantation, that we think nothing of it. The overseer of this plantation told me one day he laid a young woman over a log, and beat her so severely that she was soon after delivered of a dead child. A bricklayer, a neighbor of ours, owned a very smart young negro man, who ran away, but was caught. When his master got him home, he stripped him naked, tied him up by his hands, in plain sight and hearing of the academy and the public green, so high that his feet could not touch the ground; then tied them together, and put a long board between his legs to keep him steady. After preparing him in this way, he took a paddle, bored it full of holes, and commenced beating him with it. He continued it leisurely all day. At night his flesh was literally pounded to a jelly. It was two weeks before he was able to walk. No one took any notice of it; no one thought any wrong was done."

TESTIMONY OF JOHN RANKIN,

A native of Tennessee, educated there, and for a number of years a preacher in slave states—now pastor of a church in Ripley, Ohio.

"In some parts of Alabama, you may see slaves in the cotton fields without so much as even a *single rag* upon them, shivering before the chilling blasts of mid-winter. Indeed, in every slave-holding State *many slaves suffer extremely*, both while they labor and while they sleep, *for want of clothing* to keep them warm. Often they are driven through frost and snow without either stocking or shoe, until the path they tread is dyed with the blood that issues from their frost-worn limbs! And when they return to their miserable huts at night, they find not there the means of comfortable rest; but *on the cold ground they must lie without covering, and shiver while they slumber.*

"In connection with their extreme sufferings, occasioned by want of clothing, I shall notice those which arise from the want of food. As the making of grain is the main object of their mancipation, masters will sacrifice as little as possible in giving them food. It *often* happens that what will *barely keep them alive* is all that a cruel avarice will allow them. Hence, in some instances, their allowance has been reduced to a *single pint of corn each* during the day and night; and some have no better allowance than a small portion of cotton seed!! And in some places the best allowance is a peck of corn each during the week, while perhaps they are not permitted to taste meat so much as once in the course of seven years, except what little they may be able to steal! *Thousands of them are pressed with the gnawings of cruel hunger during their whole lives.*

"Many poor slaves are stripped naked, stretched and tied across barrels or large bags, *and tortured with the lash during hours, and even whole days, until their flesh is mangled to the very bones.* Others are stripped and hung up by the arms, their feet are tied together, and the end of a heavy piece of timber is put between their legs in order to stretch their bodies, and so prepare them for the torturing lash—and in this situation they are often whipped until their bodies are covered *with blood and mangled flesh*, and in order to add the greatest keenness

to their sufferings, their wounds are washed with *liquid salt!* And some of the miserable creatures are permitted to hang in that position until they actually *expire*; some die under the lash, others linger about for a time, and at length die of their wounds, and many survive, and endure again similar torture. These bloody scenes are *constantly exhibiting in every slave-holding country—thousands of whips are every day stained in African blood!* Even the poor *females* are not permitted to escape these shocking cruelties."—*Rankin's Letters, pages* 57, 58.

TESTIMONY OF ASA A. STONE,

A Theological Student, who resided near Natchez, Mississippi, when he published the following statement, dated 24*th* 5*th mo.*, 1835.

"No one here thinks that the slaves are seldom overdriven and under-fed. Every body knows it to be one of the most *common occurrences*. No planter of intelligence and candor denies that slaves are very generally badly treated in this country. *I wish to be understood now at the commencement, that, intending as I do that my statements shall be relied on, and knowing that, should you see fit to publish this communication, they will come to this country, where their correctness may be tested by comparison with real life, I make them with the utmost care and precaution.* But those which I do make are made without the least apprehension of their being controverted. . . . In the first place, with respect to labor. The *time* of labor is first to be noticed. It is a general rule on all regular plantations that the slaves rise in season in the morning to *be in the field as soon as it is light enough for them to see to work*, and remain there until it is *so dark that they cannot see*. This is the case at all seasons of the year; so that during the summer they are in the field at least *fifteen hours*. This does not include the time spent in going and returning; that must be done while it is too dark to suffer them to work. even if the field, as is frequently the case, is a mile distant. It is literally true, what one of them remarked to me the other day, that "they never know what it is to sleep till daylight." . . . . Their suppers they have to prepare and eat after they return home, which. at this season of the year, takes them until nine o'clock: so that, without leaving a

moment of time for any other purpose, they can have but seven hours' sleep before four in the morning, when they are called. . . . . On almost every plantation, the hands suffer more or less from hunger at some seasons of almost every year. On the majority of plantations, the feeding supplies the demands of nature tolerably well, except in the winter, and at some other occasional times. There is always a *good deal of suffering* on them from hunger in the course of the year. On many plantations, and particularly in Louisiana and among the French planters, the slaves are in a condition of *almost utter famishment* during a great portion of the year. Let a man pass through the plantations where they *fare the best*, and see fifty or sixty hands, men and women, sitting down on the furrows where their food-cart happens to overtake them, and making their meal of a bit of corn-bread and water, and he will think it is rather hard fare. This is not unfrequently the case on plantations where they are considered well-fed. . . . . .

"I will now say a few words about treatment and condition in general. That floggings are very common and severe, appears from what has already been said. I must now say that flogging for all offences, including deficiencies in work, are *frightfully common*, and *most terribly severe*.

"*Rubbing with salt and red pepper is very common after a severe whipping.* The object, they say, is primarily to *make it smart;* but add, that it is the best thing that can be done to prevent mortification and make the *gashes* heal."

TESTIMONY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD OF KENTUCKY,
A large majority of whom are or have been slave-holders.

"This system licenses and produces *great cruelty*.

"Mangling, imprisonment, starvation, every species of torture, may be inflicted upon him, (the slave,) and he has no redress.

"There are now in our whole land two millions of human beings, exposed, defenceless, to every insult, and every injury short of maiming or death, which their fellow-men may choose to inflict. *They suffer all* that can be inflicted by wanton caprice, by grasping avarice, by brutal lust, by malignant spite, and by insane anger. Their happiness is the sport of every whim and the prey

of every passion that may occasionally or habitually infest the master's bosom. If we could calculate the amount of wo endured by the ill-treated slaves, it would overwhelm every compassionate heart—it would move even the obdurate to sympathy. There is also a vast sum of suffering inflicted upon the slave by humane masters, as a punishment for that idleness and misconduct which slavery naturally produces. * * *

"*Brutal stripes*, and all the varied kinds of personal indignities, are not the only species of cruelty which slavery licenses. * * * Brothers and sisters, parents and children, husbands and wives, are torn asunder, and permitted to see each other no more. These acts are daily occurring in the midst of us. The shrieks and the agony often witnessed on such occasions proclaim with a trumpet tongue the iniquity and cruelty of our system. * * * *There is not a neighborhood* where these heart-rending scenes are not displayed. *There is not a village or road* that does not behold the sad procession of manacled outcasts, whose chains and mournful countenances tell that they are exiled by force from all that their hearts hold dear."—*See Address of Synod to Churches, in* 1835, *page* 12.

TESTIMONY OF THE MARYVILLE (TENNESSEE) INTELLIGENCER, OF THE 4TH OF 10TH MO., 1835.

The Editor, in speaking of the sufferings of the slaves which are taken by the internal trade to the Southwest, says:

"Place yourself in imagination, for a moment, in their condition: with *heavy galling chains* riveted upon your person; *half-naked, half-starved;* your back *lacerated* with the 'knotted whip;' travelling to a region where your *condition through time will be second only to the wretched creatures in Hell.*

"This depiction is not visionary. Would to God that it was."

TESTIMONY OF COLONEL WILLIAM KEYS,

A native of Rockbridge County, Virginia, where he resided about thirty years—now well known and greatly respected in southern Ohio.

"In that part of Virginia where I resided, (the valley,) so far as relates to food, clothing, and labor, slaves

may be said to be well used, when compared with the *barbarity* of their treatment farther south, or wherever they are held in large numbers; yet, even where I lived, though few slaves comparatively were held, *many* acts of *atrocious cruelty* were perpetrated. I have seen *aged, gray-headed slaves stripped, tied up, and whipped with a cowhide*, forty or fifty lashes, for no fault but absence for a few minutes too long when wanted. Such things I call *cruelty*, but they pass among slave-holders *for nothing*."

Dated Hillsborough, Ohio, 1st of 1st mo., 1835.

AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE

OF

JAMES WILLIAMS,

AN

AMERICAN SLAVE.

NOTICE BY THE EDITOR.—The reader is referred to John G. Whittier, of Amesbury, Mass. — — — for the following statements, who have heard the whole account of his story from the very lips — Emma Lindsley, of Limberton, Pa. — Lindsley Coates, of Lancaster Co., do. — James Miller, of Philadelphia — Lewis Tappan, Elizur Wright, Jun., Rev. Dr. Cox, and Rev. James A. Perkins, of New-York. The latter gentleman was Chaplain of the House of Representatives of this State, when Mr. Williams was a member of it, and he says that the statements which follow, in the James Williams's own language, is the same he had often heard him relate, from his own knowledge of slavery in that State.

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